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ABSTRACT

The final report describes The Realistic Transition Project, a 3-year project designed to help mildly handicapped 17 to 21-year-olds in the transition from school to competitive employment. Social skills necessary for seeking and maintaining employment and money management skills were two important curriculum components. Specific objectives and their degree of achievement are listed and discussed for each of the following goals: design service delivery model to improve the transition of mildly handicapped students from school to work/independent living; field test the transitional model; and replicate the model and disseminate results. Separate chapters deal with the following program aspects: characteristics of population and environment, evaluation, dissemination activities, replication, and products developed. Conclusions are drawn in terms of generic service delivery; impact on agencies, state, and community; impact on young people with disabilities; major and minor breakthroughs, and successful aspects of the program. Suggested improvements include greater variety of curriculum materials and more community support services. Most of the document consists of appendixes including: attendance data, tables of placement and outcome data, brochures and letters, newsletter and newspaper articles about the program, results of the replication effort, examples of the follow-up survey, and the text of the manual for best practices and procedures developed by the project. (DB)

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SPECIAL EDUCATION

Vocational Special Needs Programs

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROJECT: A REALISTIC TRANSITION MODEL FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL HANDICAPPED

FINAL REPORT

University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

James Q. Affleck
Principal Investigator

Greg R. Weisenstein
Director

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CONTINUING EDUCATION PROJECT: A REALISTIC TRANSITION MODEL FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL HANDICAPPED

FINAL REPORT

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U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Grant No. G008430120. Project Term: January, 1985 through December, 1987

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THE CONTINUING EDUCATION PROJECT:
A REALISTIC TRANSITION MODEL
FINAL REPORT

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THE CONTINUING EDUCATION PROJECT: A REALISTIC TRANSITION MODEL FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL HANDICAPPED STUDENTS FINAL REPORT

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

A. Statement of Original Purpose

The Realistic Transition Project (RTP) was a three-year joint project of the University of Washington and Highline School District supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). The project, conducted from January, 1985 through December, 1987, responded to an OSERS priority for model projects to meet the needs of secondary school students with disabilities who would be making transitions from high school to employment and independent living. The RTP model was designed to serve the large population of students in the age range 17 to 21 who have mild disabilities. The RTP demonstrated a practical approach to improving outcomes in early post-high school employment, and the procedures manual developed as part of the project describes best practices that are transferable to other programs.

The focus of the RTP was employment, as the ability to get and keep a competitive job (one paying minimum wage or above) is considered fundamental to achieving an independent life as an adult in the community. Skill requirements for entry into the program were minimal, but students did have to give some evidence of motivation to eventually seek employment. Social skills necessary for seeking and maintaining employment and money management skills were therefore two important curriculum components. Other related skills for independent living were included in the training. Assessments when students entered the program were used to develop a career profile for each individual. The RTP programs were designed to appeal to students who might otherwise drop out of school for economic reasons, and also to allow options for students who were eligible and wished to return to school after completing the training. Programs were scheduled to allow students to work or complete high school while enrolled in RTP.

The RTP was developed in a multicultural, urban environment, and the amount and nature of experimental data collected limit the generalizability of results. Some of the curricula used in the model program were, however, simultaneously field-tested at other sites nationwide, and the aggregate results show potential benefits in a wide variety of settings. The RTP demonstrated ways to bridge together resources available in the schools and the community to create individualized programs. The staffing pattern and allocation of resources in the RTP allowed the program to be self-supporting, indicating the feasibility of implementing similar programs based on this model in other sites.

Results of the RTP show that special programs designed to meet the needs of secondary students who have mild disabilities can significantly improve outcomes in terms of employment and post-school independence. This report is very data rich, and examines each of the components of the project. Readers

will want to refer also to information in the RTP Manual for Best Practices and Procedures published by the project staff in December, 1987. The manual provides much project history that complements the data in this final report. Copies of that manual and additional copies of this final report may be obtained by writing to Dr. Greg Weisenstein, Director, Vocational Special Needs Program, 407 Miller Hall, DQ-12, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195.

B: Accomplishments for Each Goal and Objective

The following is a list of project goals and objectives for the three years of operation and the related accomplishments to date.

Goal 1: Design service delivery model to improve the transition of mildly handicapped students from school to work/independent living.

Objective 1.1: Form advisory committee

An advisory committee--including representatives of local school districts, community colleges and vocational technical schools, state departments of education and vocational rehabilitation, the University of Washington, parents of individuals with disabilities, and private industries--was formed during Year 1 and met twice during each year of the project. Committee members were kept up to date on project activities and evaluation findings and were asked to provide assistance on program modifications and future directions.

A project management team--which included the U.W. project coordinator and project evaluator, the principal of Woodside School (a self-contained special education high school), the district's secondary special education coordinator, the transition teachers and aides, and the district's vocational placement specialist--also met biweekly for the duration of the project. This latter position was created during 1985 within the secondary special education program with responsibility for coordinating all vocational assessments, job placements and community liaison activities, and networking with vocational education. This was the result of an effort initiated by the RTP to circumvent unproductive competition for student placements among the various special education and vocational programs in the district.

Objective 1.2: Hire project staff

Project staff were hired in year one, and most continued in their responsibilities during Years 2 and 3. The original classroom teacher left the project to assume a new position as Vocational Placement Specialist for the Highline School District; her replacement was fully integrated into the project during Year 2. An additional teacher and aide were also hired to accommodate the increased number of students enrolled in RTP during the last quarter of Year 2 and throughout Year 3.

Objective 1.3: Develop transition curriculum

The project used curricula developed, revised, and field-tested by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center of the University of Oregon throughout the project. The four curricula are:

1. Interpersonal skills training for employment
2. Money management
3. Social skills for apartment living
4. Job search.

Two researchers from the University of Oregon traveled to Highline School District during Year 2 to conduct daylong inservice training on their curricula for project staff. Contact with the Oregon researchers was maintained throughout the project, and RTP staff assisted them to evaluate and further refine these materials.

Goal 2: Field-test Transition Model

Objective 2.1: Select pilot project site

The pilot project was completed in June, 1985 and formed the basis of first year project activities. During the remainder of Year 1, the transition model was further refined and substantially modified (see Project Modifications, below, and the First Year Report for more detailed discussion).

Objective 2.2: Select student population pool

The initial pool of students included in the pilot project were referred by the district's multidisciplinary team and evaluated by the special education administrator. Out-of-district referrals were made directly to the special education administrator. Originally, enrollment was limited to 18-21 year olds with mild mental retardation. In Year 2, the criteria were broadened to include 17 year olds and students with other mild handicapping conditions (see Section C). During that year, project staff developed final guidelines on how students would be admitted into and exit the program.

The program had a pilot phase during which only 5 students were enrolled and tested. The full program operated with project funding for two full school years and the first semester of a third year. Enrollments were as follows:

Pilot Phase (Jan. - June, 1985)	5 students
September, 1985 - June, 1986	15 students
September, 1986 - June, 1987	35 students
September - December, 1987	27 students*

* 3 of the students enrolled in September, 1987 were from the group enrolled the previous school year.

A combined total of 79 students were served, 74 of them benefitting from the full RTP program, and all but 7 of them participating for longer than one month. By June, 1987, 27 students had completed the program successfully. The school district continued the program after the end of project funding, so the 24 students who had not completed by December, 1987 (the end of the project) remained in the program.

Objective 2.3: Implement transition model

The modified transition model developed after the pilot study was implemented in Year 2 and continued without further modification in Year 3. The model was extended in the third year to serve a more diverse group of students than that which was served during the pilot year.

Objective 2.4: Evaluate the model

See Part III of this report for a complete description of evaluation activities.

Objective 2.5: Disseminate results

Dissemination activities and accomplishments are discussed in Part IV of this report.

Goal 3: Replicate Model and Disseminate Results

Objectives 3.1 - 3.4

The substantive changes which were made in the project were fully implemented in September, 1986. As reported in the second Annual Report (February, 1987), the management team for the project decided that replication at a different field site would not be appropriate until the revised project was operating smoothly and its efficacy evaluated. Therefore, expansion within the Highline School District to serve the needs of more special education students assumed priority over replication. Replication outside the school district was not possible within the present funding cycle (see Section C below).

Objective 3.5: Disseminate model

Dissemination activities are discussed in Part IV of this report.

C. Project Modifications

1. Target Dates

Funding for the project was not awarded until January, 1985, midway through the school district's academic year. The remainder of this year was used to pilot the original model and to identify changes that needed to be made in order to achieve a viable program. This, in turn, delayed all subsequent activities. The model could not be fully implemented until the 1985-86 school year began in September.

As outlined above, the original model was substantially restructured during this period. This restructuring, while creating a strong and viable transition program for secondary special education students, extended well into the third project year. As a result, replication activities did not occur during the funding cycle. However, several neighboring school districts were invited to monitor the development of the transistion program and are preparing to replicate the model in a form appropriate for their district. Since the model project continued at district expense, the program staff will remain available for consultation to other school districts.

2. Changes in Student Population and Program Structure

As originally proposed, the student population for this project was to have included only 18 to 21 year-old students classified as mildly retarded who had completed the courses and credits needed to graduate from high school. During preliminary planning, however, school district personnel and project staff determined that these criteria were too limiting and that they excluded a larger group of students who would benefit from program placement. A decision was made during Year 2 to broaden the eligibility requirements to include students with other handicapping conditions, specifically learning disabilities and behavioral disorders, and also 17 year olds who were in their last year of high school and wished to graduate with their classmates. The inclusion of this group made the program much more attractive to secondary special needs students throughout the school district. During Year 3, students with hearing impairments and mild multiple handicapping conditions were also allowed to participate in the RTP (see tables in Appendix A).

Some students referred to the project were severely credit deficient. They were placed in the RTP for vocational training and employment; if interested, they were referred to the district alternative high school for GED preparation if academic skills permitted, or to a community college to pursue a state high school equivalency diploma. Other students who were minimally credit deficient could work toward graduation in the district or receive a state high school equivalency diploma while participating in the RTP curriculum. All students could receive from .5 to 2.0 academic, elective, or occupational credits each semester for enrolling in the RTP, but academic credits equivalent in number to those earned in a full-day academic program could not be offered. Thirteenth year students, for whom the model was originally designed, could enter the program for additional vocational training and support. These students could elect to defer receipt of their diploma and continue to receive services through RTP classroom and employment activities. They received elective credits which appeared on their transcripts.

The initial design for RTP was based on adult education models in which participants work during the day and attend school at night. Evening classes were held Monday through Thursday during Year 1 and the first half of Year 2. During the day, teachers made active efforts to see that students were placed and maintained in full- or part-time employment. While this approach was able to provide a flexible alternative to the traditional high school curriculum and opportunities to gain transitional skills, unexpected difficulties arose in its implementation.

The daytime-work/evening-class model was found to be inappropriate for a number of reasons. First, the original model was based on an assumption that RTP students would be in the competitive market for daytime jobs. In practice, many of the jobs available to students are at night, on weekends, or intermittent ("on-call"). Students were thus likely to be home all week long with no structured activity. A corollary problem was the potential for student burnout. Those who were, in fact, fully employed during the day risked being too tired to benefit from evening classes four nights per week. Program staff realized that the demands of attending both work and school might lead to increased experiences of failure in one or both settings.

Second, the evening teaching schedule was a problem for teachers. Limited contact with other professionals during the workday contributed to feelings of isolation and burnout among staff.

A third difficulty, reported early in the project by RTP staff, was that many students were coming into the program without minimal job readiness skills. Some students had limited awareness of vocational possibilities and unrealistic expectations of the kinds of jobs for which they would be suited. Others lacked sufficient vocational training, work experience, or transportation skills to secure competitive employment.

In order to be able to respond effectively to these individual differences, the program structure needed to be extremely flexible. Therefore, beginning in the 1986-1987 academic year (Year 2), the format was changed. Students met twice a week during the daytime hours for 2-1/2 hour group classes. The remainder of their time was spent in vocational training, in classes required for graduation, on the job, or in individual meetings with project teachers. Each student's program was unique and individualized to fit specific personal and employment needs.

Program teachers functioned throughout the project as both teachers and caseworkers. They provided educational interventions (the RTP curriculum) and employment interventions (job procurement and job maintenance assistance), and they helped students take advantage of resources such as community colleges, job training centers, district academic programs, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, other adult services, and job opportunities. This structure was found to be viable and was continued without further modification in Year 3.

Positive and negative impacts on the project were caused by several events and issues that were not anticipated in the original project plan.

Low Initial Enrollment

Starting the program with only 5 students enrolled, the project staff needed to spend considerable time marketing the program to counselors, parents, psychologists, teachers, and prospective students. Staff efforts were successful, and after the initial pilot period, enrollment increased.

Changes in Staffing

Because of a temporary disability of a school district administrator, staff assignments were changed after the program had started. The reassignment of one of the project teachers made it necessary for the project to operate for a period of time with a staff person who did not have the appropriate skills for this kind of program. However, this did provide a test of the RTP model under less than ideal conditions. Results indicated that properly trained staff serve to increase the effectiveness of the model, but beneficial student outcomes can be obtained even with marginally trained staff.

Strong Support from the School District

The district's enthusiastic support and commitment to the project enhanced the quality of RTP, enabled project staff to double the number of students served during the second year, and made it possible for the project to become a program. The district has continued the program at district expense in 1988 after completion of the three-year model demonstration project period.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT

A. Client Demographic Data

Appendix A documents the number of students served through the project, as well as the number and type of handicapping conditions represented. All students were between the ages of 17 and 21. They included students with mild mental retardation, learning disabilities, hearing impairment, behavioral disorders, and multiple mild handicapping conditions, all of whom qualified for special education services. Students were referred to the program by the district's multidisciplinary team. The special education administrator then evaluated the recommendation and placed the student in the program if appropriate. Out-of-district referrals were made directly to the special education administrator.

Enrollment was open throughout the year, and students could contract to complete their participation at the end of any semester. In order to be accepted into RTP, students had to demonstrate motivation to find and hold employment. They had to be able to learn to travel independently to and from their jobs and school, using the most appropriate form of transportation available, whether public bus, taxi, private vehicle, or coworkers. They had to show potential in developing and/or maintaining appropriate standards of appearance that would be established by their employers and required in the work environment. They also had to demonstrate a willingness to comply with rules and regulations that would be imposed by employers, and had to possess sufficient cognitive and physical abilities to master skills required in any entry-level job within one week of on-the-job training.

B. Environmental Conditions

The RTP model was developed in a multicultural, urban environment. The Highline School District is located just south of Seattle, Washington and serves a diverse socioeconomic and ethnic population.

The RTP was originally housed at an alternative high school (Satellite School) but was relocated at the beginning of the 1986-87 school year to a community education center called the Sunnydale Community Center. While owned and operated by the Highline School District, Sunnydale is not one of the district's regular high school facilities.

This setting was found to be an important component of the model. Because the focus of a transition program is on the world of work, the preferred setting was found to be an off-campus location that minimized distractions and created an adult environment distinctly different from high school settings. Sunnydale School was accessible to community and school resources and to businesses and industries that offered entry-level employment to its students.

A number of existing support services within the school district and community extended the resources of the RTP and also helped prepare students to take advantage of these services upon graduation. Among the support services used were consulting psychological services (including district psychological services, community mental health centers, community youth services bureaus), post-secondary vocational training resources (community colleges, vocational technical institutes, district occupational skills center, etc.), and government agencies (such as the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and King County Work Training Program, and the Job Training Partnership Act, JTPA).

At entry into the program, a number of barriers to service appeared to exist for the students. Students frequently did not know how to identify, understand, or gain access to the various bureaucracies in order to request needed services. Some students experienced physical barriers (such as insufficient of inconvenient public transportation, specialized equipment not available in local agencies), while others lacked effective communication skills. Some students who were also parents needed affordable day care facilities which were not readily available. Homelessness was found to be a significant problem among the students with learning disabilities and behavioral disorders; other students needed to leave home to live independently, but were unable to locate appropriate transitional living arrangements.

C. Chracteristics of the Program

Classroom services offered during the first semester of the 1986-1987 and the 1987-1988 school years included:

1. Classes in: budgeting and banking skills, specific job search skills, and human relations;
2. Employment support group;
3. Leisure skills.

Employment-related services included:

1. Vocational assessment;
2. Employment referrals and support throughout the search process;
3. Financial incentives to employers;
4. Job coaching after placement;
5. Training in travel via bus or automobile;
6. Facilitating communication between employer and student.

In addition, RTP participants were eligible for: seminars on anger management, assertiveness, and decision making; counseling services; advocacy; referrals to postsecondary programs and social service agencies; and transition support for parents during Years 2 and 3 of the project. Some of these services were provided by project staff. Contact with other services was coordinated and facilitated by project staff.

III. EVALUATION

A. Measures of Independence

During Year 3 of the project, intensified effort was made to measure student progress in the development and acquisition of independent living skills. Two types of measurements were used: curriculum-based, and norm-referenced. Through collaboration with the University of Oregon Adult Skills Development Center, assessment of RTP students in the areas of social skills, money management, and job search skills provided pre/post data based on training with University of Oregon-developed curriculum. RTP was included in the results, as this was one of seven replication sites used to determine the effectiveness of this curriculum. Separate evaluation will be discussed below.

The second method used to assess the development of independence in RTP students was the administraiton of the Woodcock-Johnson Scales of Independent Behavior, an adaptive behavior scale. This instrument measures adaptive behavior in four domains: motor skills, social and communication skills, personal living skills, and community living skills. A summary score for broad independence is also obtained. Performance of RTP students was then compared to that of a sample of students selected from the special education population of three high schools in the Highline School District (the same district as the site of the Realistic Transisitions Program). Data analyzed from these two separate studies constitute the evaluation of independence for RTP students.

Independence Study A: Oregon Replication Data

The Adult Skills Development Program (ASPD) of the University of Oregon (UO) replicated its results during the 10-month period from September, 1986 through June 1987. Although some of the curriculum materials on independent living skills were available and used during the previous year by RTP teaching staff, formal evaluation was not conducted until this period. RTP was one of seven replication sites in the western United States and 25 RTP students participated in the study. RTP staff conducted classes in the following ASDP curriculum areas: social skills, money management, and job search, and Interpersonal skills training for employment. Pre/post scores were collected from the following test instruments:

Social Skills for Community Living Knowledge Test

Budgeting Knowledge Test

Budgeting Applied Test

Banking and Bill Paying Knowledge Test

Banking and Bill Paying Applied Test

Job Interview Skills Test

According to the University of Oregon developers, pre/post scores showed gains across nearly all classes and sites. As a point of reference in evaluating the RTP scores, average gain for the entire replication from pretest to post-test was 10 percentage points across all classes from all sites. The RTP site represented a unique setting among the field test sites and, because of the non-classroom nature of RTP, devoted less time to the application of the curriculum. Results for RTP pre/post testing are exhibited below in Table 1.

Table 1: Pre/Post Scores at Highline RTP by Class

Class	Percentage Point Gain*
Social Skills for Community Living	+3
Money Management	+3
Job Search	+1

*P .05, (T test, 2-tailed)

While the increase in percentage point gain is modest, in the area of money management skills, it is statistically significant. It is also important to note that RTP teaching staff considered the Job Search curriculum difficult for students to master. Across all replication sites, Job Search averaged only a 5 percentage point gain, compared to 8 percentage points gain for Money Management, and 10 percentage points gain for Social Skills for Community Living. The Interpersonal Skills Training for Employment curricula was not included in the ASDP replication study. RTP staff tested 24 students using the Test of Interpersonal Competence for Employment by Foss, Cheney, and Bullis (1983). Interactions with supervisors and coworkers are assessed through the oral presentation of multiple choice items. Only 13 out of the 24 students assessed at pretesting completed the post-test. Table 2 presents the results for those 13 subjects.

Table 2: Test of Interpersonal Competence for Employment:

Change Scores for Co-workers and Supervisors Interaction Tests

Test	# Increased Scores	No Change	# Decreased Scores
Interactions with Coworkers	2	3	8
Interactions with Supervisors	6	1	6

On the average, 7 percentage points were lost from pretest to post-test on the Coworkers Test, and 0.7 points were lost on the Supervisors Test. RTP teaching staff indicated that this curriculum was not effective with the RTP students due to an inadequate fit between the content of the curriculum and the students' interests and abilities.

Independence Study B: Within-district Comparison

Subjects

During Year 3 of RTP, two groups of students were selected to investigate the development of independent living skills. The first group consisted of RTP students enrolled at the end of Year 2. This group was made up of 11 students (9 male, 2 female), of whom seven had been identified as mildly mentally retarded and four as learning disabled according to Washington State rules and regulations. The average age of this group of students was 224 months or 18.7 years, and they ranged in age from 17 years, 6 months to 21 years, 1 month.

The comparison group consisted of 12 students (8 male, 4 female) who were selected from the special educaton population from two high school resource rooms and a self-contained high school facility for handicapped students. The handicapping conditions were identified as mildly mentally retarded (N=3), specific learning disabled (N=7), severely behaviorally disabled (N=1), and health impaired (N=1). The average age of this group of students was 217 months, or 18 years, and they ranged in age from 17 years, 5 months to 19 years, 5 months.

Tables 3 and 4 show the distribution of students by gender and handicapping condition for both groups.

Table 3: RTP Group Gender

vs. Handicapping Condition

	MMR	LD
Male	6	3
Female	1	1
N=11		

Table 4: Comparison Group Gender

vs. Handicapping Condition

	MMR	LD	BD	HI
Male	1	5	1	1
Female	2	2	0	0
N=12				

MMR: Mild Mental Retardation
LD: Learning Disability
BD: Behavioral Disorder
HI: Health Impairment

Method

The Woodcock-Johnson Scales of Independent Behavior were administered by special education teachers of students in RTP and the comparison group at two intervals: at the beginning and at the end of the school year. A total of six teachers rated the students in independent living in the areas of motor skills, social and communication skills, personal living skills, community living skills, and broad independence. The project evaluator administered the instrument to the four teachers of students in the comparison group and trained and supervised RTP teachers in its use.

Data was analyzed to determine whether either group would show a significant increase or decrease in the acquisition of independent living skills as rated by their teachers. Two-tailed T-tests were used to examine pre/post changes for each group.

Results

The Woodcock-Johnson Scales of Independent Behavior (SIB) yield four types of scores: age scores, percentile ranks, normal curve equivalent scores, and standard scores. For the purpose of this analysis, only standard scores are reported. Pre/post scores for RTP and comparison group students are shown in Tables 5 and 6. RTP students were perceived to make significant increases in the domains of independent living covered by this test. In contrast, students' scores in the comparison group appeared to drop over time and a lack of progress was seen relative to their performance on this test.

Table 5: Paired Samples T-test

Pre/post SIB Standard Scores: RTP

Skill Domain	Pretest $\bar{X}$	Post-test $\bar{X}$	Sig. Diff.
Motor	55	79	.002**
Social/ Communication	54	69	.000**
Personal Living	62	77	.018*
Community Living	61	77	.001**
Broad Independence	46	68	.000**

N=11

*p _ .05, **p _ .001

Table 6: Paired Samples T-test

Pre/post SIB Standard Scores: Comparison Group

Skill Domain	Pretest $\bar{X}$	Post-test $\bar{X}$	Sig. Diff.
Motor	90	88	.75
Social/ Communication	80	73	.02*
Personal Living	95	92	.20
Community Living	91	80	.06
Broad Independence	84	77	.04*

N=12

*p .05

Discussion

RTP students' progress in the domains measured by the SIB is encouraging, expecially since it supports the progress of the same group of students highlighted by the University of Oregon replication studies for ASDP curricula. As reported previously, RTP students increased their money management skills, job search skills, and social skills after exposure to specialized curricula. The results from the analysis of the Scales of Independent Behavior suggest that the program provided RTP students with increased knowledge and skills to better cope with the tasks of independent living. However, limitations of this study prevent generalization to other groups or populations.

Several research design problems appeared over the course of evaluating the independence of students in the project. First, the small numbers of students referred for placement to RTP made it difficult to obtain a large enough sample to be statistically meaningful in comparison to other groups. Consequently, a decision was made to include the total group, as it existed in September, 1987. As can be seen from the monthly enrollment chart, Table A1 (Appendix A), this group consisted of twice as many students identified as mildly mentally retarded (MMR) than learning disabled (LD) or severely behaviorally disabled (SBD). Limited availability of classrooms with moderate numbers of MMR students in other schools in the district made it difficult to randomly select a group of students which would be equivalent to the RTP

group. It should be noted that by the end of the school year, RTP enrollment had risen to 35 students, of whom 24 were identified as LD or SBD, and 11 as MMR. However, only students enrolled in RTP at the beginning of the school year were considered eligible for the evaluation on the SIB.

Future studies of transition should attempt to compare individuals of similar handicapping conditions in the acquisition of independent living skills. The RTP and comparison group within the district were too dissimilar to allow for a meaningful comparison. However, these results can be seen as preliminary explorations into the efficacy of specific training for independence among a mildly handicapped population.

B. Placement Outcome Data

Appendix B of this report contains tables of descriptive data on the occupational placements of students during and after their participation in RTP. This data was gathered by RTP teachers at two times. For the persons who participated in the program during the months from September, 1986, to June, 1987, data was gathered in May, 1987 (while they were enrolled in RTP) and again in Noverber, 1987 (as a follow-up). Data was also gathered during November, 1987 on the group enrolled in RTP at that time. A follow-up questionnaire was developed and used first with the pilot group of students who participated during the 1985-86 school year. A sample of the survey questionnaire is included at the end of Appendix B.

Tables B1, B10, and B17, display the wage ranges for jobs hely by students in the three data groupings described above. They show that, generally, students held jobs in the unskilled of semi-skilled categories, and earned hourly wages in the ranges $3.35-$4.00 and $4.01-$5.00 (for either full-time or part-time employment). There were slight, but insignificant, changes between the pattern for students during the 1986-1987 school year and "graduates" contacted six months later. Because most of the group of students enrolled in RTP in the fall of the 1987-1988 school year did not have time to complete theri programs before the last data collection point, that data is best compared to the data from the 1986-1987 "during RTP" tables.

Tables B2, B11, and B18, display similar data comparing the lengths of time RTP participants stayed employed at those jobs withing the same wage ranges. These tables show that few RTP students or "graduates" employed more than six months in any one job, and very few were employed for more than 12 months. However, it is important to remember that at the time of data collection, many of the jobs were part-time while the student completed high school, or were newly found positions, and no long-term follow-ups have been recorded since the end of the project. Again, there was a slight difference in the overall pattern of employment, with graduates tending to remain employed longer, but the numbers of jobs reported on and the nature of the data do not allow any definitive statement of significant improvement.

RTP staff noted the significant barriers encountered in the participants' searches for employment and the financial incentives that influenced prospective employers' hiring decisions. For both groups of students, skill deficits, particularly interpersonal and vocational skills, were most often

identified as the primary barriers to employment. Academic skill deficits were also commonly identified as barriers. The two mot commonly identified barriers outside of the skills groups were drug/alcohol abuse and familial support. Remediation in these areas may be important to the long-term placement patterns of similar programs, and this points to the need for interdisciplinary programs or stronger inter-agency collaboration in developing students' individual plans. Program advisors may have to take into account the need for dealing with issues arising in a student's home and personal life, facilitating referrals to specialized services.

C. Cost Effectiveness

Program cost effectiveness can be measured along several different dimensions. Those most commonly employed include some evaluation of the outcomes of a program in relation to the costs of producing those outcomes or the determination of the costs of serving individuals in one program as contrasted to another.

The first measure of cost effectiveness requires that a value be placed on certain outcomes (e.g., student achievements, services). While this was difficult to accomplish in the case of the RTP, preliminary indications are that RTP services to older secondary students were more effective than those that currently exist in the district. Furthermore, follow-up shows that most RTP students are beginning to make satisfactory transitions from school to community as compared to their counterparts in other programs. These accomplishments, plus those listed elsewhere in this report, are presently being obtained in the Highline School District at a cost equivalent to comparable self-contained special education models.

Once established, the RTP model in Highline School District was continued using district vocational and special education funding. This was possible because the RTP had been developed so that the costs of its maintenance would not exceed the costs of comparible programs serving similar students. That is, per-student costs for services through RTP are about the same as the per-student costs to the district for providing services through other models.

Table 7: Number of Students Supported by Each Funding Source

	JTPA	DVR	DDD
Program Training		3	
Placement	10		
Job Coaching		2	1

JTPA: Job Training Partnership Act
DVR: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
DDD: Division of Developmental Disabilities

Services were provided to both RTP staff and students from the following sources:

1. University of Washington provided a program manager and program evaluator who met with RTP staff on a bi-weekly schedule. The UW personnel provided technical assistance in the areas of evaluation, policy, curriculum, and objectivity.

2. University of Oregon provided curriculum in the areas of:

   Budgeting, Banking, and Bill Paying

   Money Management

   Job Search

   Social Skills

   Working II: Interpersonal Skills Assessment and Training for Employment

3. The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) contracted with King County Work Training Program who provided assistance to RTP in the areas of career counseling, job development and job procurement, financial incentives for employers, and work clothes and materials.

4. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Developmental Disabilities provided job training and placement programs, job coaching, travel training and assessment.

5. Highline Youth Service Bureau (HYSB) provided seminars on anger management, decision making, and assertiveness traning. Students utilized the HYSB for individual and family counseling, drug assessment, and drug counseling.

6. Mental Health Sevices provided day treatment programming and individual counseling for RTP students.

IV. DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

A. Professional Reports

During Year 1, presentations on the project were given at the Washington Association of Vocational Education Special Needs Personnel (WAVESNP) conference and at Seattle University's First Conference on the Education of Exceptional Individuals by the Project Coordinator and Project Evaluator. Interim evaluation reports were distributed to members of the Project Management Team and others in the Highline School District and at the University of Washington.

During Year 2, approximately 100 copies of the first year's annual report were distributed to individuals and organizations throughout the United States who had requested information about the project. Although staff members did not make formal presentations about the program during this time because the model was being substantially revised during much of the year, the Project Coordinator presented information at a state-level meeting attended by directors of Transition Projects in Washington.

During Year 3, the Project Coordinator, Project Evaluator, and one of the RTP teachers presented the model at the Washington State Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) annual conference, and at the "Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities" conference in Seattle. The Co-Principal Investigator presented information about the project at the national CEC Division on Career Development meeting in Nashville, and at the Illinois Transition Institute's Directors Meeting in Washington D.C. Approximately 100 copies of the second year's annual report and the Manual for Best Practices and Procedures were distributed to individuals and organizations requesting information about the project. Among groups receiving the information were the Universities of Nevada and Illinois, the New Jersey Department of Education, the Alabama Association for Retarded Citizens, Good Samaritan Hospital in Tacoma, Washington, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Washington State. (This mailing list is contained in the Project Documentation File at the University of Washington.)

B. Community Outreach

Outreach to the local community took place on a number of levels. At the school district level, information about the project was distributed to students, parents, teachers, counselors, psychologists, and administrators in the Highline School District throughout the three years of the project. Staff members attended multidisciplinary team meetings on a regular basis throughout the academic year, met annually with special education students and parents, kept the Highline School District Administration apprised of project progress through the district Director of Special Education, and sent letters and brochures about the project to junior and senior special education students throughout the district at the end of each academic year.

On the state level, staff members communicated regularly with appropriate state agencies such as the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Developmental Disabilities, the King County Work Training Program, the Washington State Transition Services department of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), community mental health and youth service agencies. Potential and actual employers of project students were also contacted throughout the project.

C. Impact of Local Outreach

Efforts to market and/or promote the program were essential to gain support from school district personnel, parents, and the community. As a result of these outreach efforts, the project grew from an experimental pilot classroom of 5 students to its current enrollment of 28 students and its

adoption by the district as an integral component of the secondary special education curriculum, with continued funding by both the Special Education and Vocational Education departments.

D. State Organizations

RTP staff participated in the Washington State CEC annual conference and in the Washington State OSPI Transition Services' efforts to coordinate and disseminate information about all transition projects occurring within the state. Activities related to the latter included a state-level meeting during Year 2 and articles about the RTP for two newsletters that reach all parents and school staff in the state: Networking, and Your Public Schools.

E. Dissemination Methods

Informative brochures and letters (see Appendix C) were sent to parents of special education students who were juniors or seniors in high school within the Highline School district and were distributed to district special education students and teachers throughout the three funding years. Articles about the RTP appeared in school district and local advocacy group publications to help inform parents and educators about the project. Success stories of individual students were also published in education newsletters and local newspapers to increase public knowledge of the program. (Copies of these articles appear in Appendix D.)

F. Product Dissemination

Copies of the Best Practices and Procedures Manual and the RTP annual reports have been distributed to all individuals and organizations requesting information about the project.

G. Information Requests

All requests for information received were entered into the project mailing list and automatically received information about the RTP as it was generated.

V. REPLICATION

As noted earlier in this report, substantive changes were made in the project throughout Years 1 and 2, and the revised model was fully implemented in September, 1986. This allowed only one full academic year in which to evaluate its efficacy. The management team for the project decided that replication at a different field site would not be appropriate until the revised project, which included greater numbers of learning disabled students as well as students with hearing impairments and multiple handicapping conditions, was evaluated. Expansion of the revised RTP within the Highline School District to serve the needs of more special education students assumed priority over replication.

We believe that the model which emerged as a result of the modifications reported earlier in this report is strong and viable and makes a significant contribution toward meeting the needs of secondary special education students. We also believe that the model is transferrable to a wide range of educational environments serving secondary special needs students.

The chief replication tool is the Manual for Best Practices and Procedures developed by the project management team. It summarizes experiences that may be helpful to other school districts who work with this population, reviews successes and problems in each aspect of the project, and sets forth a list of recommended practices that seem essential to a successful program. This manual should enable any interested school district to replicate the RTP.

Dr. Greg Weisenstein, Director of Vocational Special Needs Projects at the University of Washington, and Dr. Dina Benedetti, Director of Special Education for the Highline School District, can be contacted in the future for assistance in replicating this model project, c/o Vocational Special Needs Programs, DQ-12, 407 Miller Hall, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

VI. PRODUCTS DEVELOPED

The Manual for Best Practices and Procedures and a project brochure were developed by the project staff. As mentioned earlier, both these products should enable any interested school district or educational organization to replicate and/or implement transition services for secondary special needs students.

Copies of the project brochure were distributed to all junior and senior secondary special education students and their parents in the Highline School District, as well as to district special education teachers, psychologists, counselors, administrators, vocational educators, and to individuals and organizations throughout Washington and the United States that requested information about the RTP. Copies of the Manual for Best Practices and Procedures were distributed to these same individuals and organizations in Year 3 and will be available after that time by contacting either Dr. Weisenstein or Dr. Benedetti. Both these products should enhance the implementation of transition services for secondary special needs students in the educational settings where they are currently available.

RTP project staff also participated in the evaluation and refinement of curricular materials develoed by the University of Oregon's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center staff. These materials are available in their final form from the University of Oregon.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Generic Service Delivery

The RTP filled a need that no existing program was meeting within the Highline School District. Prior to the program's implementation, only a small

number of special education students were placed in regular, Diversified Occupations vocational classes; and even those few who were placed often failed because of inadequate support. (Vocational teachers had neither the time nor the training to deal with special populations, and no special education aides were available. There was no transportation or transportation training provided, no job coaching or special job placement assistance.)

The RTP for the first time offered these students adequate staffing and support services. It provided an alternative for special education students (primarily behaviorally disabled students) who would otherwise have dropped out of school. It now serves as a model for vocational special education throughout the district. It has raised awareness throughout the district about special education students' transition needs. For example, regular special education teachers are working to make their classes more life skills-oriented, and pre-transition materials are being developed that all special educators can use.

B. Impact on Agencies, State, and Community

The key to RTP's impact on service delivery agencies was the program teacher's role. By accompanying students on agency visits, the teachers found that their students were served more quickly, received services they may not have known about, and learned how to use the system themselves. The agencies, in turn, learned how better to work with the schools and become more responsive to students' needs. The result should be improved communication and cooperation among those involved.

Students in RTP are being taught a sense of community service in the largest sense. They learn to contribute to their communities as well as take advantage of services available. Recently, RTP participants contributed their help at the Burien Care Center for persons with severe handicaps, for example, and they provided holiday decorations at the Highline Care Center.

RTP staff members are currently participating in the state department of education's transition committee. This will enable them to share the experiences of RTP and have an impact on transition services throughout the state.

C. Impact on Young People with Disabilities

Students who have participated in RTP have become more employable and more independent. They have developed a variety of skills that will help them to lead independent adult lives, including:

1. transportation skills;
2. knowledge of community services and how to use them;
3. increased ability to search for and obtain jobs;
4. specialized work training;

5. high school diplomas (in some cases);

6. greater self-confidence (having been treated as adults and given responsibility).

D. Major and Minor Breakthroughs

RTP staff agreed that the most significant project breakthrough was the ability for students to defer receipt of their diploma, that is, to go through graduation with their peers and still participate in the program. Other major breakthroughs included the cooperation between special and vocational education within the school district, the cooperation and networking between the district and outside agencies, and the fact that the program will continue to exist. It has been officially adopted as a component of secondary special education in the school district, with joint funding from special and vocational education.

A minor breakthrough involved successful efforts to keep the program off-campus, which allowed ready access to job placements and community services and encouraged a sense of adult responsibility.

E. Successful Aspects of the Program

Many of the most successful components of the RTP were those developed during the restructuring that followed the pilot phase. These included:

1. The ability to adjust class schedules according to the demands of work schedules.

2. Staff willingness to perform a variety of functions beyond those expected of classroom teacher.

3. General program structure, including the 2 and 1/2 hour, 2 day per week class time, networking with community agencies and other school programs, function of teachers as case managers as well as instructors, and so on.

Other highlights of the model were the use of the Oregon curricula, and the options for students to earn credits toward graduation and/or to defer receipt of their diplomas while participating with peers in graduation. All of these are discussed in the guidelines included in the project's Manual for Best Practices.

F. Recommendations

In general, project staff found the revised project model very successful. Suggested improvements included greater variety of curriculum materials and more community support services. The experience at Highline strongly suggests that the model should be replicated and studied at other sites. Among the research questions to examine are:

1. Could the model be implemented productively with populations of moderately handicapped students and/or students not certified for special education?

2. Could it be implemented in post-secondary settings, such as community colleges, vocational technical institutes, etc.?

3. Is the off-campus setting appropriate for all students, or should students be offered a choice of on and off campus locations?

4. In general, can the model be tailored to meet specific needs of different settings? With some students, for example, might it be appropriate to offer classes one or two nights a week for students whose schedules require it (bearing in mind the problems that evening classes were found to raise for both teachers and students)?

Those involved in the RTP project feel confident that the model merits further use and study, with this population and others, and that it will prove flexible enough to accommodate the varying demands in new settings.

Appendix A:

Attendance Data

Table A1: Realistic Transition Project Attendance Records

Project Years 2-3: 1986-1987 School Year

Date	New Enroll.	Y.T.D. Total Enroll.	Disability Group LD/BD	Disability Group MMI	Y.T.D. -Exit RTP	Y.T.D. +Exit RTP	Total Current Enrolmt.	During RTP Enrollment: Employed	Work Exper.	Vocational Training	Referred to VAC	Referrals Considered for RTP
09/10/86	12	12	4	8	0	0	12	1	2	9	10	5
09/24/86	3	15	7	8	0	0	15	1	4	11	10	5
10/08/86	3	18	10	8	1	1	16	5	2	8	11	2
10/22/86	0	18	10	8	3	1	14	6	4	7	11	1
11/12/86	0	18	10	8	3	1	14	8	4	6	11	0
12/03/86	0	18	10	8	4	1	13	7	4	5	11	1
12/17/86	2	20	11	9	4	1	15	9	4	6	11	10
01/14/87	0	20	11	9	4	2	14	11	3	5	11	13
01/28/87	0	20	11	9	4	2	14	12	2	5	11	12
02/11/87	9	29	20	9	4	4	21	13	3	8	12	3
02/25/87	1	30	21	9	5	4	21	14	5	7	12	4
03/11/87	2	32	22	10	6	4	22	17	2	4	12	3
03/23/87	0	32	22	10	6	4	22	14	2	6	12	2
04/13/87	1	3	22	11	6	4	24	13	3	8	13	0
04/27/87	0	33	22	11	6	4	24	13	6	8	13	2
05/11/87	1	34	23	11	6	4	24	16	7	6	14	0
06/01/87	1	35	24	11	6	5 -	24	15	3	7	14	0
06/15/87	0	35	24	11	8	27	0	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage of Total Enrollment in Category:		100%	63%	37%								

- Exit: Left RTP without completing program.

Project Year 3: 1987

Date	New Enroll.	Y.T.D. Total Enroll.	Disability Group					Y.T.D. -Exit RTP	Y.T.D. +Exit RTP	Total Current Enrolmt.	During RTP Enrollment			Referrals Considered for RTP
			LD	BD	MMI	HI	Mult Imp.				Employed	Work Exper.	Vocational Training	
09/13/87	24*	24	10	4	6	1	3	0	0	24	10	0	3	0
10/01/87	1	25	11	4	6	1	3	0	0	25	11	2	6	1
11/01/87	2	27	12	5	6	1	3	1	1	25	13	4	5	0
12/01/87	0	27	12	5	6	1	3	1	2	24	13	4	7	0
Percentage of Total Enrollment in Category:			100%	44%	17%	23%	4%	12%						

* includes some students from previous year

- Exit: Left RTP without completing program.
+ Exit: Completed RTP program.

Table A2: Aggregate Attendance Records for '86-'87

Time Period	Number of Class Meetings	Number of Students	Number of Students Who Had Any Absence	Total Absences	Percent Absence Rate
09/04/86-10/30/86	17	12	4	9	4%
11/04/86-12/18/86	14	12	4	13	8%
01/06/87-01/29/87	8	14	2	2	2%
02/03/87-03/26/87	16	24	7	3	1%
04/07/87-05/28/87	16	24	8	18	6%
06/02/87-06-04/87	2	24	3	4	8%
Total Class Meetings	73			Average Absence Rate	4.8%
Total Weeks of Classes	36.5			Average Attendance	95.2%

Average Number of Students Attending: 19

Attendance Spans for the Period 9/4/86 through 6/4/87

Range: 15 to 36.5 weeks

Mean: 22 weeks

8 students attended classes for the full span of 36.5 weeks

14 students attended classes for 17 or fewer weeks

Appendix B:

Tables of Placement and Outcome Data

In the following tables, the total number of students considered for each measure was taken from the number of students during that time period who participated for more than one month. The few students who exited the program after less than one month's participation are not counted. That is why there is sometimes a discrepancy between the numbers shown in Appendix B tables and the total numbers enrolled during that period.

1986-1987 During RTP

Table B1

Wage/Level of Employment

	Wage Ranges					
Level	None	Under Minimum $3.35/hr	$3.35-$4.00/hr	$4.01-$5.00/hr	Over $5.00/hr	Totals
Work Experience	4	1	1			6
Unskilled			10	12	2	24
Semi-skilled			1	2	1	4
Skilled						0
Totals	4	1	12	14	3	34

Table B2

Wage/Length of Employment

	Wage Ranges					
Level	None	Under Minimum $3.35/hr	$3.35-$4.00/hr	$4.01-$5.00/hr	Over $5.00/hr	Totals
Under 3+ Months	4		5	5		14
4-6 Months			6	3	2	11
7-12 Months			1	5	1	7
Over 12 Months		1		1		2
Totals	4	1	12	14	3	34

Note: 24 students held 34 different employment positions during the 1986-1987 school year. RTP teachers made periodic phone contacts and compiled the information in these tables.

1986-1987 During RTP

Table B3

Handicapping Condition and Employment in May, 1987

Condition	Work Experience	Financially Supported	Competitive	Totals
Mild Mentally Retarded	3	9		12
Specific Learning Disabled		3	14	17
Seriously Behavior Disordered	1		1	2
Hearing Impaired				0
Health Impaired		3		3
Multiple Handicap				0
Totals	4	15	15	34

Table B4

Age and Employment in May, 1987

Age	Work Experience	Financially Supported	Competitive	Totals
17	1	7	5	13
18		2	8	10
19	2	5	2	9
20	1			1
21		1		1
22				0
Totals	4	15	15	34

1986-1987 During RTP

Table B5

Barriers to Successful Employment

	Barriers
Skill Deficits	
Academic Skills	4
Attending Skills	2
Interpersonal Skills	8
Vocational Skills	10
Transportation Skills	
Environmental Carriers	
Familial Support	4
Transportation	1
Vocational Training	
Work-Related Barriers	
Lack of Job Coach	1
Lack of Child Care	
Lack of Job Match	2
Lack of Ongoing Support Problems	5
Other	
Drug/Alcohol Abuse	8
Emotional/Psychological Services	5
Totals	50

Note: For each student, the two most important barriers were identified.

Table B6

Economic Incentives for Employers

	Incentives
Work Experience (no salary)	4
Work-Related Items (clothes, equip)	4
Try-Out-Employment (JTPA-full salary)	7
On-the-Job Training (JTPA-50% reim.)	4
Targeted Job Tax Credit (TJTC-40% credit)	3
Reduced Salary	1
Totals	23

Note: Funds to provide financial incentives were obtained through the state Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, King County Work Training (JTPA), Washington State Employment Security, and the U.S. Department of Labor.

1986-1987 During RTP

Table B7

Placement Support Per Student Per Week

	Minimal	Moderate	Extensive	Totals
RTP Staff	11	4	1	16
Job Coach (DVR)	1		2	3
Supervisor	2	3	4	9
Co-workers			1	1
Counselors (JTPA)	2			2
Totals	16	7	8	31

Key: Minimal: 1 contact per week (or less frequent)
Moderate: 2-3 contacts per week
Extensive: More than 3 contacts per week

Table B8

Influencing Agents in Job Placement

	Agents
RTP Staff	10
DVR	5
Parents	1
Friends	5
Financial Incentives	
Employer Demand	4
Student Initiated	7
Other District Staff	2
Total Jobs Held	34

Note: This tally represents the opinions of staff members on the primary factor in each student's placement.

1986-1987 During RTP

Table B9

Unsuccessful Placement Factors

Factor	Length of Job 0-3 Months	4-6 Months	7-12 Months	over 12 Months	Totals
Location of Job			1		1
Low Pay					0
Lack of Support		1			1
Absenteeism					0
Poor Job Match	3				3
Temporary Position	6	1	1		8
Student Attitude	1				1
Employer Expectations	1	1			2
Lack of Job Coach	1				1
Lack of Vocational Skills	2		1		3
Totals	14	3	3	0	20

Note: An "unsuccessful placement" was one lasting less than 3 months, or one which the worker left but did not move to a better position.

Table B10

Post-RTP Level of Education

Credits Earned*		Age 17	18	19	20	21	Totals
Freshman	0-6	1					1
Sophomore	7-12	2	1				3
Junior	13-18	1	4	1			6
Senior	19-22	4	7	1	1		13
Post-secondary	23-30					1	1
Total Students Served		8	12	2	1	1	24

* 22 credits necessary for Highline District high school diploma; 18 credits required for state diploma

1986-1987 Graduates (Data taken in November, 1987)

Table B11

Wage/Level of Employment

	Wage Ranges					
Level	None	Under Minimum $3.35/hr	$3.35-$4.00/hr	$4.01-$5.00/hr	Over $5.00/hr	Totals
Work Experience						0
Unskilled			3	3	1	7
Semi-skilled				2	3	5
Skilled						
Totals	0	0	3	5	4	12

Table B12

Wage/Length of Employment

	Wage Ranges					
Length of Employment	None	Under Minimum $3.35/hr	$3.35-$4.00/hr	$4.01-$5.00/hr	Over $5.00/hr	Totals
Under 3+ Months			2	1		3
4-6 Months			1	3	2	6
7-12 Months						0
Over 12 Months				1	2	3
Totals	0	0	3	5	4	12

Note: Some students had more than one job.

1986-1987 Graduates (Data taken in November, 1987)

Table B13

Handicapping Condition and Employment in November, 1987

Condition	Work Experience	Financially Supported	Competitive	Totals
Mild Mentally Retarded	3		1	4
Specific Learning Disabled		1	7	8
Seriously Behavior Disordered	1		3	4
Hearing Impaired				0
Health Impaired				0
Multiple Handicap				1
Totals	4	2	11	17

Table B14

Age and Employment in May, 1987

Age	Work Experience	Financially Supported	Competitive	Totals
17			1	1
18			5	5
19			6	6
20			1	1
21				0
22				0
Totals	0	0	13	13

1986-1987 Graduates (Data taken in November, 1987)

Table B15

Placement Support Per Student Per Week

	Minimal	Moderate	Extensive	Totals
RTP Staff	11	4	1	16
Job Coach (DVR)	1		2	3
Supervisor	2	3	4	9
Co-workers				0
Counselors (JTPA)	2		2	4
Totals	16	7	9	32

Key: Minimal: 1 contact per week (or less frequent)
Moderate: 2-3 contacts per week
Extensive: More than 3 contacts per week

Table B16

Post-RTP Level of Education

		Age					
	Credits Earned*	17	18	19	20	21	Totals
Freshman	0-6	1					1
Sophomore	7-12						0
Junior	13-18	2	3	2			7
Senior	19-22	1	4	2	2		9
Post-secondary	23-30		3	3		1	7
Total Students Served		4	10	7	2	1	24

* 22 credits necessary for Highline District high school diploma; 18 credits required for state diploma

1987-1988 School Year

Table B17

Wage/Level of Employment

Level	Wage Ranges					
	None	Under Minimum $3.35/hr	$3.35-$4.00/hr	$4.01-$5.00/hr	Over $5.00/hr	Totals
Work Experience	4	1				5
Unskilled			5	4	1	10
Semi-skilled					2	2
Skilled						0
Totals	4	1	5	4	3	17

Table B18

Wage/Length of Employment

Length of Employment	Wage Ranges					
	None	Under Minimum $3.35/hr	$3.35-$4.00/hr	$4.01-$5.00/hr	Over $5.00/hr	Totals
Under 3+ Months	4	1	4	2	1	12
4-6 Months			1	2		3
7-12 Months					2	2
Over 12 Months						0
Totals	4	1	5	4	3	17

Note: At the time this data was taken (November, 1987), 22 students held 17 different jobs during their participation in RTP.

1987-1988 School Year

Table B19

Handicapping Condition and Employment in May, 1987

Condition	Work Experience	Financially Supported	Competitive	Totals
Mild Mentally Retarded	3		1	4
Specific Learning Disabled		1	7	8
Seriously Behavior Disordered	1		3	4
Hearing Impaired				0
Health Impaired				0
Multiple Handicap		1		1
Totals	4	2	11	17

Table B20

Age and Employment in May, 1987

Age	Work Experience	Financially Supported	Competitive	Totals
17	1		4	5
18	2		4	6
19		1	3	4
20	1		1	2
21				0
22				0
Totals	4	1	12	17

1987-1988 School Year

Table B21

Barriers to Successful Employment

	Barriers
Skill Deficits	
Academic Skills	6
Attending Skills	
Interpersonal Skills	6
Vocational Skills	7
Transportation Skills	
Environmental Carriers	
Familial Support	4
Transportation	1
Vocational Training	2
Work-Related Barriers	
Lack of Job Coach	
Lack of Child Care	4
Lack of Job Match	
Lack of Ongoing Support Problems	
Other	
Drug/Alcohol Abuse	5
Emotional/Psychological Services	2
Totals	37

Note: For each student, the two most important barriers were identified.

Table B22

Economic Incentives for Employers

	Incentives
Work Experience (no salary)	4
Work-Related Items (clothes, equip)	1
Try-Out-Employment (JTPA-full salary)	
On-the-Job Training (JTPA-50% reim.)	
Targeted Job Tax Credit (TJTC-40% credit)	2
Reduced Salary	1
Totals	8

1987-1988 School Year

Table B23

Placement Support Per Student Per Week

	Minimal	Moderate	Extensive	Totals
RTP Staff	12	2		14
Job Coach (DVR)			1	1
Supervisor	4	2	2	8
Co-workers				0
Counselors (JTPA)				0
Totals	16	5	3	24

Key: Minimal: 1 contact per week (or less frequent)
Moderate: 2-3 contacts per week
Extensive: More than 3 contacts per week

Table B24

Influencing Agents in Job Placement

	Agents
RTP Staff	7
DVR	1
Parents	
Friends	4
Financial Incentives	1
Employer Demand	1
Student Initiated	3
Other District Staff	
Total Jobs Held	17

Note: This tally represents the opinions of staff members on the primary factor in each student's placement.

1987-1988 School Year

Table B25

Post-RTP Level of Education

		Age					
	Credits Earned*	17	18	19	20	21	Totals
Freshman	0-6	4					4
Sophomore	7-12		1				1
Junior	13-18	2		1	1		4
Senior	19-22		1	2	1		4
Post-secondary	23-30		4	2	3		9
Total Students Served		6	6	5	5	0	22

* 22 credits necessary for Highline District high school diploma; 18 credits required for state diploma

Appendix C:

Brochures and Letters Sent to

Parents of Eligible Students

8. How can I refer myself/my daughter/my son to the Program?

Complete this form and mail it to: Coordinator, Secondary Special Eduction, Educational Resources and Administrative Center, 15675 Ambaum Blvd. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166

Yes, I am interested in the Realistic Transition Program for myself / my child.

Name of Student: _____

School _____

Student Year in School _____

Student's Birthdate _____

Signature _____

For Additional Information

Call

Secondary Special Education Coordinator

433-2421

HIGHLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
and
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

REALISTIC TRANSITION PROJECT

(SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION)

Making the Transition
from School to Work

HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT #401
Educational Resources and Administrative Center
15675 AMBAUM BLVD. S.W.
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98166

REALISTIC TRANSITION PROJECT

Many handicapped secondary students have a difficult time making the transition from school to the adult world of work. Frequently they lack the skills necessary to be successful in job situations and in managing their personal lives.

The Realistic Transition Project will help students develop these skills, which include:

- locate and secure employment
- working effectively with supervisors and co-workers;
- planning for and managing personal business;
- obtaining help from available community resources for career development/adult education/housing/health/recreation/and other on-going needs.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

Based on the model of continuing adult education, students in the Realistic Transition Project are helped to obtain and maintain competitive employment while simultaneously attending supportive classes. During class, an emphasis is placed on function life skills. Students will discuss issues that arise on the job, and have opportunities to rehearse options for handling difficult situations. In addition, they will be taught how to obtain, maintain, and change jobs, and will work toward building satisfying and successful personal lives.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Who is eligible to participate?

Any secondary special education student who is between 17-21 years of age is eligible. In addition, the student must be motivated to work in the community, and able to provide transportation to work and school. Applicants will be interviewed and a final decision made by the screening committee.

2. Where is the Realistic Transition Project housed?

Sunnydale School
15631 DesMoines Memorial Drive
Seattle, WA 98148
(206) 433-2449

3. What hours do I attend the program?

Students are expected to work at a paid job, or to participate in work experience or vocational training. In addition, they are required to enroll in RTP classes. Individualized arrangements will be made to provide for each student's needs.

4. How long does the program last?

Students make a commitment to participate in the program one semester at a time. Students can elect to stay in the program until age 21 or until the completion of high school graduation requirements.

5. Will I receive credit toward graduation?

Yes — a maximum of 6 credits per semester can be earned for classroom work and employment.

6. How do I find a job?

Class work will include instruction in locating and obtaining employment through developing basic skills:

1. exploration of occupational choices
2. job search
3. appropriate dress and grooming
4. resume writing
5. cover letters
6. interviewing
7. temporary employment
8. unemployment insurance
9. community agencies for retraining and job finding

7. What kind of job will I have?

At entry into the program, each student's skills, interests, and abilities will be evaluated at the Highline School District's Vocational Assessment Center. A career profile will be developed, and students will be helped to secure jobs or job training which are compatible with their profiles.

Students will also be assisted when referring themselves to community agencies when appropriate. These agencies include the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Developmental Disabilities, King County Service Bureaus, King County Job Training Programs, local Community Colleges, etc.

8. Who sponsors the project?

The Realistic Transition Project is a joint effort of the University of Washington and the Highline School District, and is partially supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

HIGHLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL DISTRICT 401

P.O. BOX 66100, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98166

SATELLITE ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL
Barbara Birch, Principal
440 South 186th
Seattle, Washington 98148
433-2574

SUPERINTENDENT
KENT D. MATHESON

August 21, 1985

Dear _____

I hope you are having a nice summer! We've been preparing for the transition class and are looking forward to working with a new group of students. September will be here before we all realize it, and we want to let you know a few specifics prior to the first day of school.

Class begins at Satellite High School (440 S. 186th) on September 4th. The days we meet are Monday through Thursday, and the hours are 5-8 p.m. Our room number will be 10. See the enclosed map for the location.

We will be contacting you soon concerning the date of your Vocational Assessment Center (VAC) testing, and any job interviews that may take place prior to the first day of school. We can also work out any problems on the transportation at that time.

Until September 4th, keep having a relaxing summer!

Sincerely,

Lucille Adolphson

Lucille Adolphson
Realistic Transition Project Teacher
433-2574

cc Dina Benedetti
John Jewell

HIGHLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES and ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER
15675 Ambaum Boulevard S.W. • Telephone 206/433-0111
Seattle, Washington • 98166

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Instruction and
Curriculum
Dean Hone
Assistant Superintendent
Business and Plant

February 25, 1985

Dear Parents of 17-21 year old Special Education Students,

The Special Education Department of Highline School District and the University of Washington are working cooperatively to help students in the difficult transition between school and work. The project will involve student placement on a work site during the day and classwork four evenings during the week. It will demand a commitment from students to:

- attend evening classes from April 22 to July 17 (with an option to continue the following school year)
- maintain employment for the duration of the program
- utilize independent transportation

This is an opportunity for motivated student to obtain job skills and competitive employment while earning credit toward high school graduation.

To learn more about this new program a parent meeting will be held:

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 1985
7:00 p.m.
Educational Resources and Administrative Center
15675 Ambaum Blvd. S.W.
Seattle

For further information, contact Dr. Dina Benedetti, coordinator of secondary special education, 433-2415.

Sincerely,

Dina Benedetti

Dina Benedetti, Ph. D.
Coordinator
Special Education

DB/rw

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Assistant Superintendent
Business and Plant

August 8, 1986

Dear

Summer is nearly over and our thoughts turn to fall schedules. You are pre-registered for the Realistic Transition Project, and need to make some final arrangements prior to the start of school on September 3rd.

Transition Project student registration will take place on Friday, August 29, at Sunnydale School, 15631 8th Ave. So. At that time we will discuss class registration, transportation, and job placement. You will also have the opportunity to meet the new teachers and see the classroom at Sunnydale. Parents are invited.

Your appointment is at _____ on August 29th. If you need to reschedule, please leave a message for Lucille Adolphson at 433-2353.

We look forward to seeing you on the 29th.

Sincerely,

Lucille Adolphson

Lucille Adolphson
Highline School District
433-2353

LA/mi

cc: John Jewell
Dina Benedetti
Kate Noble
Jim Mast, Sunnydale

Appendix D:

Newsletter and Newspaper Articles About RTP

Poc file
RTP

NETWORKING

Washington State Parent Community Relations

Project "Impact" For All Handicapping Conditions

15631 Des Moines Memorial Drive
Seattle, WA. 98148
243-4830 or 1-800-422-GOAL

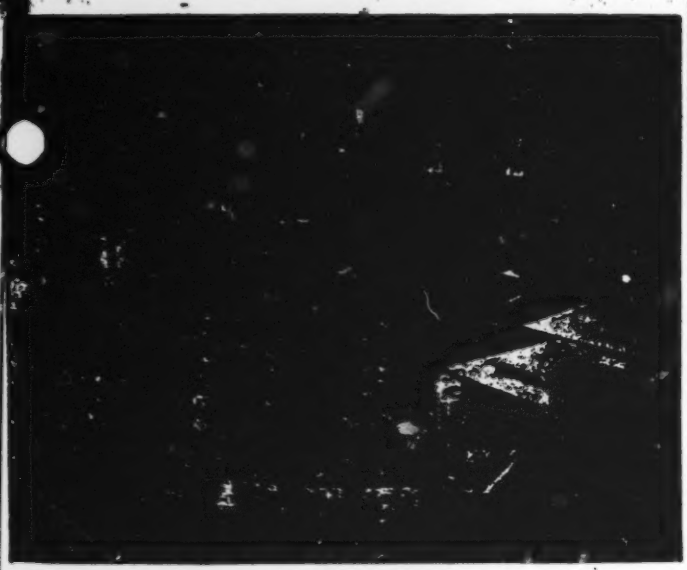
NOVEMBER 1986

Barbara Pattison Lehning
Project Director

Pilgrimage to Jantzen Beach

Special Education and the Law Conference

"We found that kids in regular schools were doing better than the kids in segregated schools, so we did what any responsible administration would do---we lost the data," joked Dr. Lou Brown, keynote speaker, and a big hit at the Special Education and the Law conference in in Jantzen Beach, Oregon, Nov. 3-4.



Students in the Realistic Transition Project acting out roles in an employer-employee situation. WSPCR would like to thank students in the RTP for all the volunteer time they put in to help us get our Networking to you.

Brown, psychologist and special education professor from the University of Wisconsin, punctuated an intelligent and well-prepared presentation with humor, poking fun at the often times absurd way special education has been dealt with since World War II.

The presentation was entitled, "Preparing People with Severe Intellectual Disabilities to Live, Work and Play in Integrated Environments."

An enthusiastic and dramatic presenter, Brown gave an overview of the progressive history of special education, including its "Sins of the Past." Brown paced across the stage, flashing slides and recounting events, such as a parent coming in to the administration to teach his child the skills needed to become a working member of society.

"You thought an occupational therapist would help get your child a job?" Brown would say, acting out his response with an air of incredulousness..."Your child exists so the occupational therapist will have a job," he finishes, the audience laughing appreciatively.

At times it seemed as if it was almost in poor taste to make fun of the way special education problems have been handled throughout the years,

Dr. Lou Brown descriptively entertains and educates an audience of nearly 600 at a Law Conference in Jantzen Beach, Oregon.

continued on p.6

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What's Happening.....p.2
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Dear Blabby.....p.5
Coming Up.....p.7

What's Happening

EHA UPDATE

The bad news is...President Reagan had not signed S.2294, the bill to reauthorize discretionary programs under the Education of the Handicapped Act, by presstime for our October issue of *Networking*.

The good news is...(as most of you are probably already aware)... that due to a deluge of phone calls pouring into the Executive Office (from many of you folks out there), President Reagan signed S.2294 into law on Oct. 8, 1986.

What was S.2294, is now Public Law 99-457.

The bad news now... is we're still waiting for President Reagan to authorize funding for P.L. 99-457.

The good news is...according to the executive office (I telephoned), this appears to be a mere formality.

As promised in the Oct. issue of *Networking*, a summary of the Early Intervention Program for handicapped infants, toddlers and their families (birth-2) and for handicapped children 3-5 follows.

Also for those of you with financial interests, the proposed budget will be compared with the 1986 budget for EHA.

HANDICAPPED INFANTS & TODDLERS

Congress has found that early intervention is needed to minimize the potential for developmental delay. Early intervention will also minimize educational costs when those handicapped infants and toddlers reach school age. It will decrease chances of institutionalization, and help families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with handicaps.

It is the policy of the U.S. to provide financial assistance to states to develop, implement and enhance the capacity to provide quality early intervention services.

The federal government will also provide grant money to preschools meeting the eligibility requirements for providing special education and related services to handicapped children ages 3-5.

For a copy of the Congressional Record, stating all the provisions, please send a stamped, self addressed envelope to WSPCR, c/o Lori O'Connell, media technician.

EHA FUNDING (in millions)

PROGRAM	1986	1987	
P.L. 94-142			
State Grants	$1,163.28	$1,338.00	up 174.72 million
Preschool Grants	28.71	180.00	up 101.29 m.
Early Intervention Initiative	0	50.00	new program
Severely Handicapped Projects	4.78	5.30	up $520,000
Early Childhood Education	22.96	24.47	up 1.51 m
Secondary Ed. & Transitional Services	6.32	7.30	up $980,000
Innovation and Development	16.08	18.00	up 1.92 m.
Technology	0	3.50	new program
Captioned Films & Educational Media	16.67	15.00	down 1.67 m
Clearinghouses	0	1.20	new program
Personnel Development	61.15	67.70	up 6.55 m.
Evaluation and Special Studies	3.09	3.80	up $710,000

GRAMM-RUDMAN UPDATE

The final 1987 "snapshot" of the economy was taken on Oct. 6. The second deficit estimate for FY'87 (identical to the first taken in August), is $163.4 billion, which is $19.4 billion greater than the maximum deficit allowable for 1987--$144 billion. (So if it's greater than the allowable deficit, how can they allow it? Stay tuned).

Congress is considering reconciliation legislation that would reduce the estimated deficit to below the maximum '87 level (aren't you glad you stayed?)

Parent Training

WSPCR Parent Training Coordinator Thelma Dirkes will be conducting Parent Training Workshops for active, interested educator professionals, parent professionals and community leaders.

The first workshop will be held at the Edgewater Inn, January 7-10.

This will be a tremendous opportunity to receive invaluable training at no cost to you personally. Accomodations will be provided by Washington State Parent Community Relations for All Handicapping Conditions.

Some of the topics discussed in the workshop will be an overview of special education and the law, FAPE, a guided lesson through the "process," related services, due process, vocational education and rural and remote training.

Again, we encourage all of you interested in learning more about special education and want to share this knowledge with others to apply.

Coordinators Named for Regional H.S. Art Shows

The Superintendent of Public Instruction's Annual High School Art Show opens March 22 and runs through April 22. Works selected at the state show will become part of the Old Capitol Building permanent art collection. The seven winners each will be presented a $200 purchase award.

The winners will be selected from approximately 100 regional winning entries. All entries for the state show must be delivered to OSPI during the week of Feb. 22-26.

ESD Regional Art Shows are as follows:

ESD 101. Coordinators: Dick Moody, ESD 101 (509-456-6195)/SCAN 545-6195), and Robie Webb, St. George's School, Spokane (509-466-1636). Artwork delivery deadline: Jan. 22. Regional show will be held Jan. 25-Feb. 19.

ESD 105. Coordinator: Marsha Pettyjohn, ESD 105 (509-575-2885/SCAN 558-2885 Ex. 132). Regional show will be held Jan. 4-Feb. 5.

ESD 112. Coordinator: Carol Hastie, ESD 112 (206-574-3212/SCAN 568-3212). Regional show will be held Jan. 26-Feb. 5 at the Columbia Arts Center, 400 W. Evergreen Blvd., Vancouver 98660.

ESD 113. Coordinator: C.E. Redfield, ESD 113 (206-586-2966/SCAN 321-2966). Regional art show will be held Feb. 12-15 at the Capital Mall in Olympia.

ESD 114. Coordinator: Denny Bond, ESD 114 (206-479-0993/SCAN 576-6399). Artwork delivery deadline: Feb. 8. Artwork will be displayed and judged the week of Feb. 15 at the ESD office. Entrants are invited to display their artwork at the Kitsap Regional Mall from May 4-9, in conjunction with the Kitsap Festival of Arts for Children.

ESD 123. Coordinator: Louise Gustafson, ESD 123 (509-547-8441). Regional show will be held Feb. 1-18.

ESD 171. Coordinator: John Rutherford, ESD 171 (509-663-8741/SCAN 565-1436). Regional show is planned to be held between Feb. 1 and 12.

ESD 189. Coordinator: Verne Fankhauser, ESD 189 (206-424-9573). The show will be held Feb. 17-18.

The Realistic Transition Project Helps Handicapped Students Succeed at School

The Realistic Transition Project (RTP) was a cooperative effort on the part of the Highline School District and the University of Washington (UW). It was undertaken from January 1985 through December 1987, and funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Purpose of the RTP was to develop a viable means of helping mildly handicapped secondary students in their last years of school (ages 17-21) move from the school setting into the adult setting of work.

The district's multidisciplinary teams target students for referral. After acceptance, students' interests, skills and abilities are evaluated at the district's Vocational Assessment Center, career profiles are developed, and students are helped to obtain and maintain employment compatible with their profiles.

The project is currently housed at a community education center (Sunnydale School, Highline School District) and staffed by two district teachers. Students attend classes two days a week for two- and one-half hours a day. The remaining time is spent on the job and/or in vocational training or high school graduation requirement classes.

The RTP curriculum focuses on functional life skills, and offers students an opportunity to discuss issues that arise on the job, solve immediate problems, and learn how to obtain, maintain and change jobs as well as build satisfying and successful personal lives.

The project was developed and implemented within a multicultural urban secondary environment, but the model is transferable to a wide range of education environments serving secondary special needs students. In December, 1987, a *Best Practices/Procedures Manual* will be available to assist educators in implementing transition services for such students.

For further information about the Realistic Transition Project contact Dina Benedetti, Highline School District, P.O. Box 66100, Seattle 98166, (206) 433-2125 or SCAN 321-2125, or James Q. Affleck, UW, Seattle 98195, (206) 543-4011 or SCAN 323-4011.

People, Places and Projects...

Realistic Transition Project

Out of the School and into the Workforce

Mick had often had arguements with his father at home resulting in violence. And his inability to deal with his teachers only served to fuel his frustration with school.

Eventually, Mick was suspended from school for smoking marajuana, while, in the meantime, tension at home became unbearable and Mick left home...again.

Though he brought many of his troubles on himself, according to his "mom," at 18, Mick was yet unprepared to meet the often complicated challenges of independent living.

The Horner family, with whom Mick now lives, gave him a second chance.

"He was a friend of my son, John, since childhood," says Katheryn "mom" Horner, adding that both John and Mick had been in special education classes for learning disabled students since they were young.

She persuaded Mick to enroll in the Realistic Transition Project, a Highline Public School Program located in the Sunnydale Community Center in the Burien-Highline area.

Though Horner says Mick enrolled in the program "under protest," Mick says, "It'd either be this, or out on the road." Besides, "it's a lot funner than going to Highline (high school)," says Mick.

"It has turned him around 100 percent," says Horner enthusiastically. "It's a fabulous program.

"He got a job yesterday and was thrilled," she says.

Employment is only one of the objectives of the project, according to Shirley Kowalski, one of two teachers currently conducting the class.

"We work with students' interests and skills to determine where they can best find employment," says Kowalski.

Currently five of the 17 enrolled students are working in a variety of jobs from the automotive industry to laundry to the grocery business to delivering pizzas.

"Most employers are pretty flexible," says Jan Reinsvold, who teaches in cooperation with Kowalski. Most employers in the Highline community will work around the students' (ages 17-21) four-and-a-half hours of classtime per week.

The project is basically designed to take students who have mild handicapping conditions like mild mental impairment, learning disabilities or behavioral disabilities, and assist them in making the transition from school to the adult world of work.

They do this in a variety of ways.

"We had a man come out from Metro Transit to teach students how to use the system," says Kowalski.

Other areas of focus include: students earning their high school diploma, assisting them in locating independent living facilities, planning for and managing personal business, utilizing community resources and, once they have a job, Kowalski and Reinsvold try to teach students how to maintain them.

One method of teaching this is through role playing.

"We (play out) human situations that we want to help them with," says Reinsvold, who credits aide Carol Clothier, a teacher in the project last year, with her expertise in the "dramatics" part of the role playing.

"They teach you how to deal with employers...If this happens, you do that," says Mick, motioning with his hands.

Still, say the educators, a main focus is on-employment. "All but one of the students are either working or are work experience students (working for experience rather than pay)," says Kowalski.

Previous students in the program have also been successful in finding employment.

One student got a job as a kitchen helper with the Highline Care Center.

"He was the nicest, sweetest person. He bought flowers for all the girls in class with his first paycheck," says Clothier, adding that that student is still working there now, a year later.

Not all are success stories however. One student had to be referred to the Youth Services Bureau for assessment and treatment because he was having problems that were drug related.

"We don't accept students who are drugs impaired, because we can't market someone (to employers) who has a drug problem," says Reinsvold.

The project is a joint effort of the University of Washington and the Highline School District. Dr. Dina Benedetti, Coordinator of Secondary Special Education at Highline, is the district supervisor for the program.

"We're right in the middle of a three-year project," says Lucille Adolphson, Job Placement Teacher and former instructor in the project, adding that the Realistic Transition Project is partially supported by a grant from the U.S Department of Education.

Appendix E:

Results of the ASDP Replication

Project Results

In the following section, results from the ASDP replication phase are presented, including a description of participating sites, student population, ASDP classes within sites, instructional setting, student assessment results, evaluation of ASDP materials, and on-site teacher observations.

Replication Sites

The Adult Skills Development Program replication was conducted during the 10-month period from September 1986 to June 1987. As shown in Table 4, the seven participating sites included three community colleges, two public schools, and two residential treatment programs in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Colorado. In accordance with the original mission of the project, the three primary replication sites were community colleges. However, the high school and residential treatment sites were included because they asked to be and it gave project staff a chance to examine the viability of the model in other settings.

Table 4
Adult Skills Development Program Replication Sites

Site	Number of participating students
Lane Community College, Eugene, Oregon	
Linn-Benton Community College Albany, Oregon	63
College for Living University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado	15
Highline School District Seattle, Washington	25
Portland Public School District Portland, Oregon	28
Asotin County Residential Services Clarkston, Washington	15
Association for Retarded Citizens Boise, Idaho	16
TOTAL:	225

ASDP Students

As Table 4 shows, the total number of students who participated in the ASDP replication was 225. Students ranged in age from 15 to 64, with the majority in their late teens and early twenties. Male students (N=132) outnumbered females (N=91) by a ratio of slightly better than two to one. For two students, data on sex were not reported. The vast majority (90%) of students were white (as seen in Table 5), and nearly half were economically disadvantaged. Fifty-six percent were considered by program directors to be academically disadvantaged in areas such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. One student did not speak English.

Table 5
Student Ethnic Background

Ethnic Background	N	%*
White	201	90
Black	15	7
Hispanic	3	1
Native American	2	1
Oriental	3	1
TOTAL	224	100

*Percents were rounded

Table 6 displays the primary handicapping conditions for ASDP students. As shown, the vast majority of students had mild to moderate mental retardation. ASDP students exhibited a wide range of abilities in community living skills. Some were referred simply to brush up on skills that were forgotten over time or to secure support in maintaining or implementing skills they already possessed. For example, a student in money management may have managed a checking account adequately, but needed help in monitoring daily spending. Other students needed instruction in basic skills relative to community living, such as using a calculator or saying no to strangers who ask for money. As learners, students were also quite diverse. While some completed lessons quickly, others benefited from repeated practice and a slower instructional pace.

Table 6
Primary Handicapping Conditions for ASDP Students

Handicapping Condition	N	%
Mental retardation (mild/moderate)	156	70
Learning disability	32	15
Speech impairment	16	7
Emotional disturbance	9	4
Visual impairment	7	3
Orthopedic impairment	3	1
Hearing impairment	0	0
TOTAL	223	100

Student residence is depicted in Table 7. Given the relatively young age of most students, it is not surprising that over half lived with their parents or other relatives. In the residential category, "other" students lived in foster homes (N=5), with spouses (N=4), in a boarding house (N=1), and in job-related accommodations (N=1). Unfortunately, two students reportedly lived on the streets.

Table 7
Student Residence

Residence	N	%
With parents/relatives	108	58
Group home	28	15
Apartment/house (alone)	25	13
Apartment/house (roommates)	14	7
Other	13	7
TOTAL	188	100

Replication Site Classes

In accordance with program resources and student need, each replication site chose to offer classes in one to four curriculum areas each term. As shown in Table 8, 29 separate classes were taught, nearly half of which were Social Skills. The Grocery Shopping component of Nutrition and Cooking was not completed in time to include in replication data.

Table 8
Number of Courses Taught at Replication Sites by Curriculum Area

Site	Social Skills	Money Management	Job Search	Nutrition/ Cooking	TOTAL
Lane Community College	2	2	1		5
Linn-Benton C.C.	6	3	1	1	11
College for Living	1		1	1	3
Highline Schools	1	1	1		3
Portland Public Schools	1	1	1		3
Boise ARC	2				2
Asotin County Res. Services	2				2
TOTAL	15	7	5	2	29

The average staff to student ratio in ASDP replication classes, as shown in Table 9, ranged from a low of three students per instructor (College for Living) to a high of 13 students per instructor (Highline Schools). The average staff to student ratio for all sites was one to six. The lowest reported staff/student ratio for a replication site class was one to two, while the highest was one to fourteen.

Table 9
Staff to Student Ratio and Number of Aides Available

Site	Average Staff/Student Ratio	Average N of Aides Per Class
Lane Community College	1:4	1
Linn-Benton Community College	1:10	1
College for Living, Greeley	1:3	1
Portland Public Schools	1:16	1
Asotin County Res. Services	1:5	1
Boise ARC	1:8	0
Highline Schools	1:13	2

Nearly all replication site teaching staff had professional degrees in special education or a related field (Table 10). Among the 20 classroom teaching assistants who participated, 11 were enrolled in graduate programs in special education, four were undergraduate students, and five were paid classroom aides.

Table 10
Teaching Staff Education

Degree	N	%
Master's	8	40
B.S. or B.A.	10	50
High School	2	10
TOTAL:	20	100

Instruction

The average length of all classes from pre-test to post-test was 10.3 weeks. The average number of hours of instruction at all sites was 2 3/4 hours per week. In nearly two-thirds of the classrooms, instruction was to

large groups (six or more), while one-third of the classes offered small group instruction (five or less students per instructor). Approximately one-third of the classrooms offered individual instruction to students.

The physical setting of instruction was primarily school classrooms (89%). Three classes were held in a community center (11%). In most cases, classrooms were physically arranged with work tables or chairs in a semi-circle to accommodate group instruction. Individual desks along with work-tables were used in 25% of the classes where some individual instruction was conducted. Within four of the classrooms, 25% to 50% of instructional time took place in the community. Such settings as streets, downtown areas, kitchens and living rooms within private residences were utilized in order to promote generalization and maintenance of skills. For 27 classes (87%), instruction was conducted entirely in the classroom.

Student Assessment Results

This section contains the following information: (1) pretest-posttest data and instruments used to collect pre/post scores on curriculum used at the replication sites, (2) average percentage point gain on pre-post knowledge tests (Table 11), (3) summaries of pre-post scores by sites and by classes taught (Table 12), statistical analysis (T tests) on significance of pre-post scores within classes and within sites as well as across sites and across classes (Table 13), explanation of variance in scores, tables of data where appropriate, (4) evaluation of ASDP curriculum and materials including narrative feedback, (5) teacher observations, and (6) summary comments concerning statistical data and their relevance to this replication and the new curriculum model.

Pretest-Posttest Data

Pre/post scores were collected from the following test instruments:

Social Skills for Community Living Knowledge Test
Budgeting and Bill Paying Knowledge Test
Budget and Bill Paying Applied Test
Banking Knowledge Test
Banking Applied Test
Job Interview Skills Test (JIST)
Nutrition and Cooking Knowledge Test

Pre/post scores showed gains across nearly all classes and sites (see Table 13 below). Average gain for the entire replication from pretesting to posttesting was 10 percentage points across all classes from all sites.

Table 11
Average Percentage Point Gain on ASDP Pre-Post Knowledge Tests Across Replication Sites

Class	Number of Sites	Number of Students	Percentage Point gain
Social Skills for Community Living	7	80	10
Money Management	4	42	8
Job Search	5	34	5
Nutrition and Cooking	2	23	1

Table 12
Average Pre/Post Scores Across all Classes Taught
By Sites

Site	Percentage Point Gain
College for Living UNC	+3
Linn-Benton Community College	+9
Lane Community College	+5
Highline, Seattle	+2
Clarkston, WA.	+24
Boise, ID.	+17
Portland, OR.	+8

Table 13
Pre/Post Scores at each Site by Class

Class/Site	Percentage Point Gain
Social Skills for Community Living	
College for Living, UNC	-3
Linn-Benton C.C.	+12 *
Lane Community College	+7
Highline, Seattle	+3
Clarkston, WA	+24 *
Boise, ID.	+17 *
Portland, OR.	+8
Money Management	
Linn-Benton C.C.	+7
Lane Community College	+5 *
Highline, Seattle	+3 *
Job Search	
College for Living, UNC	+7
Linn-Benton Community College	+11 *
Lane Community College	+3
Highline, Seattle	+1
Nutrition and Cooking	
College for Living, UNC	+3
Linn-Benton Community College	+4

*Classes showing statistical significance at the .05 level, [T test, 2 tailed].

Evaluation of ASDP Materials

The ASDP Curriculum Evaluation Form (contained in the ASDP Administration Manual) was completed by teachers, classroom assistants, and program administrators from all of the 7 sites reporting data. Fourteen different categories were rated as "OK" or "Needs work" for each curriculum: Entry Behaviors, Behavioral Objectives, Content, Sequence of Instruction, Initial Assessment/Placement, On-Going Assessment/Evaluation, Instructional Input (teaching procedures), Practice (student), Review/Maintenance, Adaptability to Individual Differences, Motivation/Interest, Physical characteristics of the Material, and Teacher Considerations.

Overall, the curriculum evaluations were very positive. Course content was generally considered by all sites to be comprehensive and relevant to students at the time of instruction and for their future success in community adjustment. Ninety percent of all categories on the ASDP Curriculum Evaluation Form were rated as "OK" across replication sites. All items rated "Needs Work" were passed on to the writers of each curriculum along with anecdotal comments, and were used to make revisions in specific areas. Items rated "Needs work" included applicability of the curriculum to specific student populations (e.g., age level), teacher directions (specifically in regard to assessment and instruction), data sheets, and follow-up activities. Careful attention was paid to these evaluations, comments, and criticisms in order to improve the quality and utility of the curriculums for various settings, student populations, and professionals in the field.

Teacher Observations

In order to ascertain the extent to which replication site teachers were correctly implementing the instructional methods and curriculum content, ASDP staff conducted at least one observation on each site using the

Teacher Observation Form (in ASDP Administration Manual). In all cases, teachers and classroom assistants exhibited enthusiasm for teaching and positive interactive styles. Observers also indicated that classes appeared to be enjoyable and involving for students.

A number of difficulties did arise, however, at several replication sites. Some teachers had problems in adhering to the systematic instructional format, particulary when students were fast learners. Discussions with project staff at sites on adapting the curriculum seemed to alleviate this problem (individual curriculum manuals contain specific information on adapting the curriculum) A second problem observed at several sites was in managing student behavior. Minor but disruptive problems that typify most classrooms, such as off-task behavior and inappropriate conversations between students during the session, were apparent in some ASDP classrooms. Teachers were able to rectify these problems in two ways: (1) by establishing clear expectations and generating with students a small number of agreed-upon classroom rules; and (2) by adapting the instructional pace and arranging the physical setting to maximize student participation (in Mechanics of Instruction section, Administration Manual).

The final problem observed within several ASDP replication classrooms was data collection. Due to some large student/teacher ratios, data collection was difficult or impossible for some teachers. In these cases, teachers were advised to enlist the help of a classroom assistant to conduct occasional data probes.

Summary Comments on Data

Differences in student populations, instructional settings, hours of instruction, staff/student ratio, student attendance, and teacher implementation of ASDP curricula and methods were expected to create variation in

student pre-post gain. Each replication site administered curriculum-related, pre-post tests to students. For all classes (Job Search, Money Management, Nutrition and Cooking/Grocery Shopping, and Social Skills for Community Living), multiple-item knowledge tests were administered prior to instruction and when the content area was completed. The response format for all knowledge tests was primarily true/false. In addition to the knowledge tests, Money Management and Job Search students received pre-post applied tests that examined their ability to perform curriculum related skills. Gains were achieved across the board for all curriculum (see Table 11). Along with results of the tests, the curriculum content was also evaluated by the following methods and instruments: (1) Teacher Observation Form, (2) ASDP Curriculum Evaluation Form, (3) annecdotal comments from site supervisors, teachers, and aides, and (4) student feedback.

Equally important was student performance in behavior rehearsals and generalization and maintenance activities as reported anecdotally by replication site staff. Comments, criticisms, and anecdotal information provided by sites on the overall curriculum evaluation was a critical factor in determining the effectiveness and validity of the ASDP program.

Appendix F:

Example of Follow-up Survey

1986 survey of 1985-86 graduates

REALISTIC TRANSITION PROJECT
Follow-up Student Survey

Name of Respondent:_____

Date of survey:_____

Length of Participation in RTP:_____

STUDENT SURVEY

1. Are you working?_____If yes, fulltime or parttime?_____

   What is your job?_____

2. Are you presently involved or have you been involved in any training programs?_____If yes, which ones?_____

   _____

3. What agencies, if any, are you using?_____

4. Have you graduated from high school?_____

5. Do you think RTP has helped you become more independent?

   _____In what ways?_____

6. In what areas do you think you still need assistance?

   a) motivation: Do you want to work? How do you know?

      _____

   b) job retention: Do you have a problem holding a job?

      _____

   c) skill acquisition: Have you developed a special skill area?_____

   d) social skills: Do you have difficulty getting along with people on the job?_____ If so, how?_____

      _____

e) personal habits: Do you have any problems with grooming or personal habits?_____

_____

f) transportation use: Has transportation use been a problem for you?

_____

g) independent living: Are you living as independently as he or she is able?_____

_____

Are you able to manage money, i.e. savings account, checking account?_____

h) other_____

7. How could the program have been more or helpful to you?
_____

Appendix G:

Manual for Best Practices and Procedures

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROJECT:
A REALISTIC TRANSITION MODEL FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL HANDICAPPED

MANUAL FOR BEST PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

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INTRODUCTION

Our public education system holds out to all Americans the promise of preparation for productive adult lives. Although recent legislation has explicitly extended this promise to the nation's handicapped students, we are still far from meeting this goal. Many handicapped students, nearly all those with mild disabilities, can succeed in the adult world of work. But they need special training and support to do so, and, until recently, there has been little available information on how to provide this assistance.

In the past few years, this has begun to change. A number of efforts have been made to develop and test potential means of helping secondary handicapped students make the often difficult transition to adult independence.

The Realistic Transition Project (RTP), a joint project of the University of Washington and the Highline School District, was one of these. It was carried out from January, 1985 through December, 1987, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education.

Although the RTP model was developed in a multicultural, urban environment, we believe the model is transferable to a wide range of educational environments serving secondary special needs students. This manual summarizes the experiences that may be helpful to others who work with this population. It reviews successes and problems in various aspects of the project and outlines a list of recommended "best practices" that seem essential to a successful program. Project data compiled over the course of the RTP are presented elsewhere. Individuals interested in examining these data should request a copy of the RTP final report from Dr. Greg Weisenstein, Director of Vocational Special Needs Program, 407 Miller Hall, DQ-12, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

Population Served

The RTP model was designed to help mildly handicapped secondary students move from the school setting to the world of work. The population served were in their final years of school (ages 17-21).

At this age, students are motivated to succeed in work experience programs like the RTP. As they approach graduation, they begin to develop adult attitudes toward work. They become more concerned about their future and begin to realize that successful work experience will assist in their transition to the world of adult independence. They are more likely to develop realistic career goals than are younger students.

Income generated through competitive employment provides additional motivation. Although socioeconomic status varies, most of the students in transition programs like the RTP come from families with limited financial resources. For them, successful employment can meet their own financial needs and assist in meeting those of their family. The model is thus attractive to

students who would otherwise choose to drop out of school in an attempt to earn an income.

The program served students who could be categorized into 3 groups in regard to credits needed:

a) Severely credit deficient students received vocational training and placements through the RTP. Upon completion of the program, or at age 21, if academic skills permitted, they were referred to a GED program or community college to pursue a state high school equivalency diploma.

b) Minimally credit deficient students could earn some academic or elective credits while attending the RTP to satisfy graduation requirements. They could graduate in the district or receive a state high school equivalency diploma. In addition to RTP classes, these students were employed or enrolled in vocational training programs.

c) Thirteenth-year students could enter the program having met all graduation requirements but needing additional vocational training and/or support for job placement. These students elected to defer receipt of their diploma and continue to receive services through RTP classroom and employment activities. They received elective credits which appeared on their transcripts.

The population served by RTP included students with mild mental retardation, learning disabilities, hearing impairment, behavior disorders and multiple mild handicapping conditions who qualified for special education services and met certain attitude and skill requirements (described later in this report).

Classroom Schedules and Credits

The students' educational and personal needs were highly varied. In order to be able to respond effectively to these individual differences, the program structure was extremely flexible. Students attended RTP classes for 2 1/2 hours a day, two days a week. Their remaining time was spent in a variety of ways: working at a paid job, completing vocational training, or taking academic and practical classes in the local high schools. Each student's program was unique and individualized to fit specific personal and employment needs. (See Appendix A for sample student schedules.)

Usually, students received 1-4 academic, elective, or occupational credits each semester for enrolling in the RTP. Some specific academic credits needed by students for graduation were offered through the classroom component or through independent study. Academic credits equivalent in number to those earned in a full-day academic program could not be offered, except through independent study electives.

Entry to the Program

Students were referred to the program by the district's multidisciplinary teams. The special education administrator then evaluated the recommendation and placed the student in the program if appropriate. Out-of-district referrals were made directly to the special education administrator. (Active marketing of the program to district special education teachers, psychologists, counselors, and administrators as well as parents and students helped maximize the appropriateness of referrals.) Enrollment was open throughout the year, and students could contract to complete their participation at the end of any semester.

In order to be accepted into the RTP, students must be motivated to achieve success at work. They were required to meet the following behavior and skill requirements:

Transportation: Students should be able to travel independently to and from their jobs and school, using the most appropriate form of transportation available (options included public bus, taxi, private vehicle, or transportation provided by friends, relatives, or coworkers). In some cases, specialized transportation training was provided by district special education teachers or high school driver education classes.

Personal Appearance: Students should be aware that, depending upon the job, standards of appearance may be established by their employers and required in the work environment. Evidence of maintaining appropriate personal cleanliness, grooming, and apparel was required.

Complying with Regulations and Rules: Students should demonstrate a willingness to comply with rules and regulations that will be imposed by employers.

Potential to Learn and Perform Entry Level Job Skills: Students should possess sufficient cognitive and physical ability to meet minimal competencies in skills required in an entry-level job within one week of on-the-job training.

Upon entering the RTP program, the student's interests, skills, and abilities were evaluated at the district's Vocational Assessment Center using the Micro-Computer Evaluation and Screening Assessment (MESA) (Valpar International, 1984). This instrument evaluates students' physical capacities and mobility, eye-hand coordination, spatial discrimination, memory, reasoning, and perceptual aptitudes, as well as vocational interests and vocational awareness. Project staff correlated the data gained from this assessment with informal student interviews and used the information to develop a career profile for each student. This was then used to assist th student in making career decisions and exploring vocational programs, training, and employment opportunities. RTP staff also integrated the MESA results with the job search component of the curriculum.

Curriculum

The focus of the Realistic Transition Project was clearly employment. Formal classroom teaching was secondary to community work experience; work schedules were a priority, and school schedules were adjusted to accommodate them. Because classroom time was limited, emphasis was placed on the teaching of functional life skills. The curriculum also offered students an opportunity to discuss issues that arose on the job. This discussion provided a chance to help students solve immediate problems and prepare to deal with similar situations in the future.

The RTP served as a field testing site for a skills curriculum developed by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center in Mental Retardation at the University of Oregon which includes sections on money management, social skills for apartment living, job search, and interpersonal skills training for employment, as summarized below:

Money Management: The Money Management curriculum is divided into four main sections:

1. Budgeting - deals with managing a monthly budget.
2. Bill paying - teaches students how to read and pay the variety of bills that are commonly received each month.
3. Checking account management
4. Savings account management - the last two sections teach students how to open an account, how to deposit and withdraw money, and how to balance the registers.

Job Search: The Job Search unit, which is divided into 5 modules, addresses skills that are necessary for employment. The modules are:

1. Development of a resume.
2. Interview skills. Prior to the first lesson, students are interviewed on videotape. For the next few weeks, they work on an interview script, memorizing answers to pertinent questions. The final test for the interview skills module is a posttest on the videocamera.
3. Job Search Script. Role modeling is a key factor in this module, where students rehearse what they say when going to a business to inquire about employment.
4. Job Search Notebook. Students compile information into a notebook which contains a resume, letters of recommendation, a completed application, and other materials useful to have at a job interview.
5. Completing a job application.

Social Skills for Apartment Living: The Social Skills unit has four modules:

1. Introduction to saying "No." Students learn the importance of being able to say "no" to a request from a stranger.
2. Introduction to asking for help. Students demonstrate the ability to initiate a conversation when they need to ask for help, either in public or from family and friends.

3. Introduction to self-management. Students demonstrate the ability to act appropriately in public.
4. Introduction to cooperation. Students learn to cooperate with people in their lives, including roommates, friends, and persons of authority.

Interpersonal Skills Training for Employment: These lessons are designed to teach skills which have been empirically identified as important for job tenure. The focus of both assessment and training is on developing strategies for effective interactions with supervisors and co-workers. Within the area of supervisor-worker relationships, the issues covered are: 1) responding to criticism and correction, 2) following instructions, and 3) requesting assistance. In the co-worker area, the topics covered are 1) cooperative behavior, 2) responding to teasing and provocation, and 3) resolving personal concerns. Each situation is presented on a short videotaped lesson in which students are asked to solve the problem in the best possible way. The correct solution is then presented and discussed.

In addition to lessons covered in the Oregon curriculum, some students required individual instruction in such skills as shopping, locating apartments, obtaining public assistance and financial aid, ordering food and eating in restaurants, and using leisure activities resources. This instruction was provided by RTP staff when time permitted or by other district special educators.

Employment Interventions

Based on the individual employment profile mentioned earlier, support in job procurement and maintenance was provided to each student by combining program and community resources to meet students' needs. The job search was conducted four ways:

1. Contacts with agencies, acquaintances, etc. - students were referred to agencies such as the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Job Training Partnership Act program (JTPA) that are knowledgeable about current job openings and training programs. These agencies would likely be contacted by students for assistance during their adult lives; through the RTP, they learned to identify and use the services available before leaving the security of the secondary schools. Students were also encouraged to contact family members, friends, former teachers and employers notifying them of their desire for work and soliciting their assistance.

2. Review of job opening announcements - in newspaper and magazine advertisements, Job Service bulletins, trade journals, and community college job boards.

3. Employer-initiated referrals - These resulted when employers contacted district staff regarding current openings.

4. Job referrals development - conducted by program staff and/or community agencies, with businesses in which the student expressed an interest. Staff members contacted prospective employers and explained the RTP

program, the student's abilities, training and support provided by the program and community agencies, and available incentives (Targeted Job Tax Credit, On the Job Training, Try-Out Employment, etc.). The staff then obtained a detailed job description - either directly from the employer or through staff observation of, and/or actual participation in, the job.

If an appropriate match between the student and the job did not appear feasible, the employer was thanked and informed that future students might be referred if appropriate. (We have found it best to be as straightforward as possible regarding skills and limitations of our students.) If the job match appeared positive, the student was referred for an interview. The employer was again contacted after the interview is over. If the student was hired, a meeting with the employer was arranged to determine the training schedule, hours, wage, start date, financial reimbursements, and so on. If any community agencies would be involved in the employment of the student, representatives also attended this meeting. When students found jobs on their own, project staff communicated with the employer as much as the employer and student deemed necessary.

Students were encouraged to conduct as much of the job search as they could independently perform. With information from the student interviews and assessment, staff members supported the student's job search as required.

Work Experiences

Work experiences were arranged for students who were not ready for competitive employment but wished to gain experiences or sample a particular type of job. Many appropriate sites were available within the school district and the community. Placements used by the RTP were in clerical, landscaping, food service, custodial, equipment repair, transportation and maintenance fields.

Employer Assistance

RTP staff members also provided a variety of services to employers to assist them in making job modifications to suit handicapped workers and to educate them about the effects of handicapping conditions on work performance. These services have included:

1. redesigning task sequences to fit students' cognitive and physical abilities.

2. orientation and/or on-the-job training of the student/employee.

3. designing visual or auditory aids to assist the student/employee to master work tasks with minimal direction from the employer.

4. insuring appropriate travel arrangements (working out bus schedules, bus stop locations, and designing routes for students who drive).

5. providing support to employers to help them work effectively with handicapped employees (including frequent follow-up phone calls while the student is employed and participating in the program).

6. facilitating the purchase of individualized equipment needed (e.g. TTY for a worker with hearing impairment, headphones to minimize distractions, etc.).

7. transferring the support delivery to adult service agencies near the termination of the student's enrollment in RTP.

Summer Support

Support to students, employers, parents, and community agencies should be available throughout the summer recess to prevent regression of student performance on jobs. The RTP used an aide to provide support and contacts for students and the kinds of employer assistance described above. (This aide did not teach the RTP curriculum, orient new students, or develop new jobs during the summer months.)

Additional Support Services

Use of existing support services within the school district and the community extended the resources of the RTP and also helped prepare students to take advantage of these services after graduation. Among the support services used were:

Consulting Psychological Services. Psychological services, provided by the school district, may include personal counseling, family consultation, psychoeducational assessment, substance abuse counseling,suicide prevention, and crisis intervention. Students could be referred to the district-provided services when needed or to mental health services in the local community, including individual and family counseling and workshops in anger management, decision making, and assertiveness training, drug and alcohol intervention, and so on.

Post-secondary Vocational Training and Placement. Students who wish to receive more extensive training than that provided by the secondary school program may be referred to community colleges, vocational technical institutes, and other community institutions for additional educational services.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

In addition to the curriculum, services, and other program components just summarized, a number of structural factors were found to be essential to the success of a transition program such as RTP. These are discussed in the next section.

Setting

At the time of writing this manual, the RTP was located at the Sunnydale Community Center, which houses a variety of community services/agencies. While owned and operated by the Highline School District, Sunnydale is not one of the district's regular school facilities.

The setting was found to be an important component of the model. Because the focus of a transition program is on the world of work, the preferred setting is an off-campus location that minimizes distractions and creates an adult environment distinctly different from high school settings. This location should be accessible to community and school resources, transportation, and businesses and industries that offer entry-level employment to young adults.

Staff

The RTP was staffed by two district teachers and two classroom aides, to serve from 22 to 26 students. A maximum teacher/student ratio of 1:12 is recommended to accommodate the variety of student needs.

Program teachers functioned as both teachers and caseworkers. They provided educational interventions (the RTP curriculum), employment interventions (job procurement and job maintenance assistance), and helped students take advantage of resources such as community colleges, job training centers, district academic programs, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), other adult services, and job opportunities.

The abilities of these staff members were critical determinants of the program's success or failure. A number of special skills and characteristics were found necessary to meet the high demands placed on program teachers and aides.

Teachers, for example, needed to be innovative, creative, and able to respond with enthusiasm, optimism, and sincerity to students who have diverse needs. They had to be:

1. flexible - willing to accept unconventional student needs as educational goals and to tailor individual programs to meet those needs.

2. self-directed - as they develop instructional objectives, seek out work opportunities for students, carry out on-the-job training, counsel students concerning job and social problems, locate resources and service agencies for students, and serve as advocates for the students within the school system and the local community.

3. team members - capable of delegating responsibility to other staff members and coordinating efforts of other teachers, service providers, and employers.

4. good communicators - because they are directly involved in conducting program-related public relations activities with the groups mentioned above.

5. able to work under pressure - as they face competing demands and crisis situations.

Both teachers and aides need to be able to work effectively with students who have one or more types of handicapping conditions. Classroom aides should be prepared to perform clerical duties and assist in job coaching, job development, travel training, and classroom teaching. They must be able to work flexibly, independently, and cooperatively.

Administrative Support

For a program such as the RTP to be successful, administrators, too, must be willing to be flexible. The nature and variety of student needs cannot be accommodated within standard school schedules and structures. This needs to be acknowledged and supported by administrators in the following ways:

Communication: Because the RTP model is preferably located off-campus, the unscheduled, casual, and intermittent communication between teachers and their principals may not be available to transition program staff. (In the RTP program, there was no building principal, and supervision of program staff was the responsibility of the special education supervisor.) Regularly scheduled meetings of the administrator (supervisor) and teaching staff are essential to promote communication and to avoid teacher isolation. Bi-weekly meetings are preferred. The transition program teaching staff should also be included in district special education meetings.

Joint Support by Vocational and Special Education: It is recommended that administrators promote joint support of the transition program by special and vocational education. Coordinated efforts between the two areas can increase the number of programs available to students and can enhance the visibility and understanding of program goals. If occupational education credits can be offered, this will make the program more attractive to students and more credible.

Coordination of Work Experience: In a large school district, teachers from several special and vocational education classes may be attempting to obtain work for their students, potentially contacting the same employers, who may then become confused or annoyed. It is recommended that a single coordinator be given responsibility for locating and maintaining all community work placements for the district.

Staff Evaluation: Administrators should understand the complexity of conducting a transition program for students with disabilities so that unreasonable demands are not placed on program staff. Evaluation of teacher performance is most properly conducted by the special education supervisor, who should be able to monitor staff development and offer suggestions for program improvement.

Budget: The administrator should facilitate the purchase of specialized instructional materials and supplies required by a transition program.

Graduation

With permission of their home school principal, students who have met graduation requirements could elect to participate in graduation ceremonies but defer receiving their diploma in order to continue receiving program services up to age 21 (if such a program is found to be appropriate to their needs). This is an extremely important option for students who are in need of additional services but want to graduate with their peers. It has been our experience that many students will not choose to take advantage of transition services if they are unable to go through the graduation ceremony. Districts are urged to have a policy deferring receipt of a diploma while allowing students to attend the graduation ceremony at their home high school.

Individualized Education Plan

The inclusion of vocational goals and objectives is an essential part of every secondary student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). These goals must be (a) tied to the curriculum, (b) evaluated regularly, and (c) adjusted to meet individual needs. In our experience, including students in the process of formulating goals, objectives, and timelines enhances their commitment to their program.

Marketing

Efforts to market or promote the program are essential to gain support within the school district, from parents and from the community. Students also need to be informed about the program.

Informative brochures (see Appendix B) or letters can be sent to parents of special education students who are juniors or seniors in high school. Publications of the school district and local advocacy groups can help inform parents and educators about the program. Success stories of individual students can be published in education newsletters and local newspapers. Public knowledge of the program can lead to greatly increased employment opportunities for students. Accurate information must be provided to district personnel to aid them in making appropriate placement recommendations.

Evaluation

The outcomes of transition programs are difficult to measure. It is hard to define and evaluate whether students have made a successful transition to adult life and to determine the extent to which an educational program has contributed to this. Efforts to evaluate the RTP confirmed these difficulties.

At the onset of the project, staff members surveyed the literature to determine whether suitable instruments existed to measure project effectiveness and student progress. As a starting point, Brolin's (Kokaska and Brolin, 1985) list of 22 life-centered career education competencies - in

the areas of daily living skills, personal-social skills, occupational guidance and preparation - were identified as the areas to measure. However, at the time the project began, no instrument existed that could assess students' skill levels on these competencies.

Alternative evaluation questions were then posed, and various instruments were piloted to determine whether they would yield useful information. Selected subtests from the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development (Brigance, 1978) were used as a pretest in the project's second year, for example, but did not appear to be a reliable or appropriate measure of the independent living skills gained by RTP students.

It was decided to use a curriculum-based assessment as a partial solution. The curriculum materials being field tested by the project for the University of Oregon included a set of pre and posttests to measure student achievement on specific skills addressed in Money Management (Nelson, Lupton, Close, Keating, Flecker, and Wells, in press) Job Search Skills (Medaglia, Close, and Slack, in press), Social Skills for Apartment Living (Wells, Keating, Close, Flecker, Auty, and McKinney, in press), and Working II (Interpersonal Skills for Employment) (Foss and Villhauer, 1986).

In addition, information on student progress was gathered through the use of the Scales of Independent Behavior (Bruininks, Woodcock, Weatherman, and Hill, 1984), an adaptive behavior scale selected for its congruence with project objectives. This instrument measures behavior in four domains: motor skills, social and communication skills, personal living skills, and community living skills. Information derived from the Woodcock-Johnson could be used to help identify areas in need of further training.

Realizing that other kinds of evaluative information in addition to student achievement were needed, the project conducted a follow-up survey of the first group of RTP participants, gathering information on parent and student satisfaction with the project and student employment status six months after they "graduated" from the project.

Other types of data collected over the course of the project included: students' attendance, work experiences, types of placements, length of employment, salary level, use of postsecondary training or state services for the handicapped, and on-the-job support to students. Cost effectiveness of the project was also calculated.

The RTP experience suggests several conclusions with implications for evaluation of other transition projects. These include:

1. The technologies for evaluating transition outcomes are evolving but presently fall short of expectations.

2. Paper and pencil tasks for students appear to be inadequate as a sole measure of student achievement. They provide some useful information but do not address more important issues of postschool adjustment.

3. Independent living skills can best be assessed through a variety of methods, including interviews of parents and students, contact with employers, observation of students in class, in training, and on job sites, etc. An approach to evaluation that uses many sources of data may be most appropriate in answering the basic questions of evaluation: Does the program make a difference, and, if so, how?

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HOW THE MODEL HAS CHANGED

Many changes and modifications in the RTP model were made over the three years of federally funded demonstration and research. The most significant changes, and the rationale behind them, are summarized in this section.

Adult Education Model

The initial design for RTP was based on adult education models in which participants work during the day and attend school at night. Evening classes were held Monday through Thursday. During the day, teachers made active efforts to see that students were placed and maintained in full or part-time employment. While this approach was able to provide a flexible alternative to the traditional high school curriculum and opportunities to gain transitional skills, unexpected difficulties arose in its implementation.

The daytime work/evening class model was found to be inappropriate for a number of reasons. First, the original model was based on an assumption that RTP students would be in the competitive market for daytime jobs. In practice, many of the jobs available to students are at night, on weekends, or intermittent ("on-call"). Students were thus likely to be home all week long with no structured activity.

Second, the evening teaching schedule was a problem for teachers. Limited contact with other professionals during the workday contributed to feelings of isolation and burnout among staff. A corollary problem was the potential for student burnout. Those who were, in fact, fully employed during the day risked being too tired to benefit from evening classes. Program staff realized that the demands of attending both work and school might lead to increased experiences of failure in one or both settings.

A third difficulty, reported early in the project by RTP staff, was that many students were coming into the program without minimal job readiness skills. While career awareness is an objective of the secondary special education program, some students had limited awareness of vocational possibilities and unrealistic expectations of the kinds of jobs for which they would be suited. Others lacked sufficient vocational training or work experience necessary to secure competitive employment.

Student Population

Other changes involved the student population to be served. Originally, the program was designed to accept only students with mild mental retardation. This was later expanded to include other mild handicapping conditions - including learning and behavior disabilities, hearing impairments and multiple mild handicaps - as it became apparent that these students could benefit from a program such as RTP. Students originally were to have been between 18 and 21 years of age, but entry criteria were broadened to include 17 year olds who wished to graduate with their classmates. The inclusion of this group greatly increased the number of students with disabilities other than mild mental retardation and made the program more attractive to secondary special needs students throughout the school district.

In response to these issues, the project was restructured in the 1986-87 academic year so that program services would be provided primarily during daytime hours; and the model was changed from a primarily group-centered, self-contained classroom to the more highly individualized and flexible approach described in this manual. We believe that the resulting model makes a significant contribution toward meeting the transition needs of secondary special education students.

GUIDELINES

Based on the experiences of the RTP, project staff have identified a series of recommended guidelines. They should be useful to anyone interested in developing a program to meet the needs of mildly handicapped youth as they make the transition from school to the adult world of work.

Student Population

The RTP model and the general guidelines given here are appropriate for students with a variety of mild handicapping conditions who are in their last years of secondary school. The number of academic credits earned need not affect eligibility. The program can serve students who have already completed graduation requirements together with those who are minimally or severely credit deficient, provided that students take advantage of other resources in the school and community.

Students should enter the program already able to (a) travel independently, (b) maintain appropriate standards of personal appearance, (c) comply with rules and regulations of employers, and (d) learn entry level work skills within one week of on-the-job training.

Curriculum

Teachers of a transition program cannot be expected to provide training in regular academic subjects. The curriculum should focus on readiness for employment and adult life and should include (a) personal finances, (b) social skills, (c) job search, (d) employment skills, and (e) access to community resources (e.g. mental health services, financial assistance, adult service programs such as DVR, etc.).

Class Schedule

The RTP schedule, in which students participated two days per week for 2 1/2 hours per day on a flexible basis, worked very well. It permitted students to take advantage of available resources and allowed adequate time for work.

It is recommended that students' work schedules take priority over class schedules in a transition program.

School and Community Resources

To be effective, transition programs must help students use resources within the school district and the community, including academic and practical classes offered by the schools; training programs available through community colleges, the Private Industry Council, adult services agencies, etc.; counseling, financial assistance, and other social services.

Employment Assistance

Students in the program need to be supported in finding, obtaining, and maintaining jobs. Program staff should be involved in a broad-based job development network capable of contacting service agencies and employers, responding to employer-initiated referrals, and making appropriate matches between students and job openings. Students themselves need to be active participants in the job search.

Staff members should be aware of financial incentives and assistance available to employers and should be prepared to offer assistance in modifying the job site to accommodate handicapped workers.

Work experiences should be available for students not ready for competitive employment.

Setting

The preferred setting is an off-campus location that minimizes distractions and creates an adult environment. It should be accessible to community and school resources and to potential job sites.

Staffing

Staff abilities are crucial determinants of program success or failure. Teachers should be able to function effectively as both educators and case workers, providing training in the program curriculum, employment interventions, and referrals to outside resources on a flexible basis in response to individual needs. Teachers and aides must be prepared to work (both independently and as members of a professional team) with students who have a variety of handicapping conditions.

A staff ratio of approximately 12 students to each teacher is recommended.

Administrative Support

Administrators should see that the program receives coordinated support from vocational and special education and should assure the availability of special instructional equipment, staff support (e.g. deaf interpreters, teaching aides, appropriate teacher/student ratio), and supplies. Regular meetings should be scheduled between administrators and program staff.

It is strongly recommended that each district have a single person assigned to coordinate all work experience and job development efforts - for transition students and those in other district vocational programs.

Some measure of support should be made available during the summer months when school is not in session. At a minimum, this requires one aide who can provide student contacts and employer assistance as needed.

Marketing

In order to maximize the appropriateness of referrals, a transition program has to be "marketed" to principals and other administrators, to teachers, parents, and members of the multidisciplinary team . Because most districts lack experience with such programs, this involves education about the meaning of transition as much as advertisement of the program itself. Marketing should include such in-house activities as presentations at faculty meetings, feedback to staff on students' progress in the program, and informal individual communications - as well as announcements in newsletters and public media.

Evaluation

Evaluation of transition programs requires the collection of different types of information from different sources, including curriculum-based assessments; norm-referenced testing (an adaptive behavior scale is a good tool for assessing individual student progress); interviews with parents, teachers, employers, and students; and, if possible, behavior assessments.

Evaluation questions should be clearly framed. The most important questions are: How well is the program meeting student needs, and what progress are the students making?

Flexibility

Perhaps the most essential element of a transition program is flexibility. It is absolutely necessary that the program be capable of adjusting to the highly individualized needs and resources of different students and different communities. Models should not be structured too rigidly; staff members and administrators should be prepared to adjust to roles and schedules not ordinarily within school district patterns; there should be an openness to change and experimentation, all with a focus on the ultimate goal of preparing students for success as independent, productively employed adults.

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Appendix A

REALISTIC TRANSITION MODEL

5 hours a week in program

. 2 hours classroom - 2 days: a.m. or p.m.
  1 hour Employment Support group: p.m.

SAMPLE SCHEDULES

I. Student is 17, on track for graduation. Earns Math and English credit in RTP. Earns 3 credits at OSC.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
A.M.	8:30-10:30 RTP 11:15-2:00 OSC	Homework 11:15-2:00 OSC	8:30-10:30 RTP 11:15-2:00 OSC	Homework 11:15-2:00 OSC	11:15-2:00 OSC
P.M.	3:00-5:00 Work	3:00-5:00 Work	3:00-5:00 Work	3:00-5:00 Work 5:30-6:30 ESG	3:00-5:00 Work

II. Student is 18, has 22 (44) district credits. Has opted to stay for 13th year.

A.M.	7:00-11:00 Work	7:00-11:00 Work 1:00-3:00 RTP	7:00-11:00 Work	7:00-11:00 Work 1:00-3:00 RTP	7:00-11:00 Work
P.M.				5:30-6:30 ESG	

III. Student is potential dropout, age 18 with 7 credits. Earns U.S. History at Tyee, Math and Language Arts credit in RTP, and 2 work credits.

A.M.	9:45-10:45 Tyee Homework	9:45-10:45 Tyee 1:00-3:00 RTP	9:45-10:45 Tyee Homework	9:45-10:45 Tyee 1:00-3:00 RTP	9:45-10:45 Tyee
P.M.	5:00-11:00 Work	5:00-11:00 Work	5:00-11:00 Work	3:00-4:00, ESG (Individual) 5:00-11:00 Work	5:00-11:00 Work

OSC: Highline School District Occupational Skills Center

ESG: Employment Support Group

TYEE: One of the Highline School District's High Schools

RTP: Realistic Transition Project

REALISTIC TRANSITION PROJECT

Many handicapped secondary students have a difficult time making the transition from school to the adult world of work. Frequently they lack the skills necessary to be successful in job situations and in managing their personal lives.

The Realistic Transition Project will help students develop these skills, which include:

- locate and secure employment
- working effectively with supervisors and co-workers;
- planning for and managing personal business;
- obtaining help from available community resources for career development/adult education/housing/health/recreation/and other on-going needs.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

Based on the model of continuing adult education, students in the Realistic Transition Project are helped to obtain and maintain competitive employment while simultaneously attending supportive classes. During class, an emphasis is placed on function life skills. Students will discuss issues that arise on the job, and have opportunities to rehearse options for handling difficult situations. In addition, they will be taught how to obtain, maintain, and change jobs, and will work toward building satisfying and successful personal lives.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Who is eligible to participate?

Any secondary special education student who is between 17-21 years of age is eligible. In addition, the student must be motivated to work in the community, and able to provide transportation to work and school. Applicants will be interviewed and a final decision made by the screening committee.

2. Where is the Realistic Transition Project housed?

Sunnydale School
15631 DesMoines Memorial Drive
Seattle, WA 98148
(206) 433-2449

3. What hours do I attend the program?

Students are expected to work at a paid job, or to participate in work experience or vocational training. In addition, they are required to enroll in RTP classes. Individualized arrangements will be made to provide for each student's needs.

4. How long does the program last?

Students make a commitment to participate in the program one semester at a time. Students can elect to stay in the program until age 21 or until the completion of high school graduation requirements.

5. Will I receive credit toward graduation?

Yes — a maximum of 6 credits per semester can be earned for classroom work and employment.

6. How do I find a job?

Class work will include instruction in locating and obtaining employment through developing basic skills:

1. exploration of occupational choices
2. job search
3. appropriate dress and grooming
4. resume writing
5. cover letters
6. interviewing
7. temporary employment
8. unemployment insurance
9. community agencies for retraining and job finding

7. What kind of job will I have?

At entry into the program, each student's skills, interests, and abilities will be evaluated at the Highline School District's Vocational Assessment Center. A career profile will be developed, and students will be helped to secure jobs or job training which are compatible with their profiles.

Students will also be assisted when referring themselves to community agencies when appropriate. These agencies include the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Developmental Disabilities, King County Service Bureaus, King County Job Training Programs, local Community Colleges, etc.

8. Who sponsors the project?

The Realistic Transition Project is a joint effort of the University of Washington and the Highline School District, and is partially supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

8. How can I refer myself/my daughter/my son to the Program?

Complete this form and mail it to: Coordinator, Secondary Special Eduction, Educational Resources and Administrative Center, 15675 Ambaum Blvd. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166

Yes, I am interested in the Realistic Transition Program for myself / my child.

Name of Student: _____

School _____

Student Year in School _____

Student's Birthdate _____

Signature _____

For Additional Information

Call

Secondary Special Education Coordinator

433-2421

HIGHLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
and
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

REALISTIC TRANSITION PROJECT

(SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION)

Making the Transition from School to Work

HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT #401
Educational Resources and Administrative Center
15675 AMBAUM BLVD. S.W.
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98166